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Lakeland Tourism Destination Resort Plan

Prepared for
Alberta Tourism



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Government of Alberta recognizes that tourism is a major and growing economic factor in the Province. Alberta Tourism, in an attempt to capitalize upon this growth, has examined a number of regions in the province which are characterized by important tourism resources.

The following consultant's report identifies and investigates potential tourism development opportunities in the Lakeland/Lac La Biche area. This Tourism Destination Resort Plan reviews the impact and relationship of these opportunities to local and regional tourism frameworks. The plan assesses existing tourism resources, potential tourism markets, regional requirements, potential developments, economic impacts and the roles of various participating sectors.

It should be noted that this study was conducted by an independent consultant commissioned by Alberta Tourism and does not represent government policy nor any commitment to implementation at this time.

If you have any comments relative to the report please forward them to:

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Additional copies of the report are available by contacting the above address, or by telephoning 427-2501.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bernard F. Campbell".

Bernard F. Campbell
Deputy Minister

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Purpose of Study	1
1.2 Tourism Generators	1
1.3 Methods	2
1.4 How to Use This Study	2

CHAPTER TWO: DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA	3
2.1 Definition of the Study Area	3
2.2 Service Centres	3
2.3 Natural Features	3
2.4 Historic and Cultural Features	5
2.5 Services and Infrastructure	6
2.6 Existing Recreational Visits	7
2.7 Tourism Attitudes, Awareness, and Service	11

CHAPTER THREE: MARKET ANALYSIS	13
3.1 Marketing Priorities and Strategy	13
3.2 Market Size	14
3.3 Key Market Segments	16
3.3.1 Household Segments	16
3.3.2 Vacation Segments	17
3.3.3 Special Interest Markets	19
3.4 Market Perceptions	20
3.5 Competitor Analysis	20
3.6 Other Factors	21

CHAPTER FOUR: REGIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TOURISM GROWTH	23
4.1 Tourism Attractions	23
4.2 Tourism Services	24
4.3 Tourism Infrastructure	25
4.4 Tourism Marketing and Promotion	27
4.5 Tourism Attitudes, Awareness, and Hospitality	27

CHAPTER FIVE: ROLES OF PARTICIPATING SECTORS	29
5.1 Private Sector	29
5.2 Provincial Government	30
5.3 Federal Government	32
5.4 Local Government	32
5.5 Not-For-Profit Sector	33
5.6 Indian Reserves and Metis	33

CHAPTER SIX: POTENTIAL TOURISM GENERATOR DEVELOPMENTS	35
6.1 Criteria for Success	35
6.2 Lakeside Resorts	35
6.3 Adventure Opportunities	42
6.3.1 Scenic Touring Opportunities	42
6.3.2 Trail Development Opportunities	42
6.3.3 Fish and Wildlife Tourism Opportunities	44
6.4 Potential Heritage Tourism Developments	45
6.4.1 Heritage Resources in the Area	46
6.4.2 The Lac La Biche Mission	47
6.4.3 Portage La Biche/Fur Trade Interpretation Area	50
6.4.4 Lac La Biche Trail (Beaver River Route)	52
6.4.5 Fur Trade Outposts	52
6.5 Lac La Biche South and Eastern Shores	52
6.6 Generator Analysis: Proposed Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area	54
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	63
7.1 Summary	63
7.2 Overview of Current Status of Tourism Development	63
7.3 Requirements of Success	64
7.4 Recommended Strategies	66
7.5 Market Development Strategies	67
7.6 Conclusions	68

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

- (1) Market Size and Traffic Statistics*
- (2) Accommodation and Outdoor Recreation*
- (3) Focus Group Results*
- (4) Local Events and Sports Tournaments*
- (5) Tourism Facilities and Services*
- (6) Top Ten Community Tourism Action Plan Priorities*
- (7) Potential Local Market for Historic Site School Tours*
- (8) Personal Contacts*
- (9) Description of Proposed Generators in the Lakeland
 Destination Study Area*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This plan was completed in May, 1990, with the purpose of describing tourism development opportunities, requirements and strategies in the Lakeland area, located approximately 250 kilometres northeast of Edmonton, Alberta. The plan identified and assessed five kinds of potential tourism generators: lakeside resorts, adventure opportunities, heritage tourism developments, Lac La Biche (southern and eastern shores), and Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area. The plan is intended to be used for tourism planning and to support decision-making about tourism development by elected officials, the private sector, Community Tourism Action Plan Committees, and non-profit groups.

1. Potential for Tourism Development in the Area

The area is considered to have excellent potential for tourism development. The unusually high concentration of lakes with good water quality, fishing, and high quality beaches provides a natural resource that already attracts more than 120,000 visitors annually. As well, the area includes several historic

elements that are part of the internationally famous story of the fur trade. Although tourism in the area is not currently growing, it is expected to grow in the near future because of several activities underway in the area by both the private and public sectors. These include:

- a) Designation of the Lac La Biche Mission as a Provincial Historic Resource and a National Historic Site;
- b) Improved access to lakes;
- c) Increased range of lakeside accommodation and recreation; and
- d) Provincial announcement of the intention to develop Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area.

2. Proposed Tourism Development

There is a wide range of tourism development proposed for the Lakeland study area. Potentially the overall tourism product can be substantially improved within five years, if the participating sectors coordinate their efforts.

The known major proposals are indicated on Figure 7. The "core area" for tourism development is the town of

Lac La Biche and the adjacent south and east lakeshores. This area combines services, recreational attractions, scenery, and heritage sites in close proximity.

The other major tourism attraction area is the lake area southeast of Lac La Biche. The Province has announced its intention to include much of this area in a Provincial Park and a Provincial Recreation Area. Additional attractions include the Caslan sandhills, in the western portion of the study area, and Heart Lake, to the north.

The key for successful tourism product development will be to diversify the current product offering and thereby attract a broader market to stay longer and spend more money.

• Key Strategies

(1) *Develop a diverse tourism attraction around the town of Lac La Biche.*

This attraction will be anchored by a developed waterfront area in the town, and by a significant golf course development. Careful development will provide a wide range of opportunities for tourists, within a short distance. Emphasis should be placed upon the town's origin as a fur trading post. As well, the development of deluxe fixed-roof accommodation on the lakeshore near the golf course would significantly broaden the existing tourism product. Private developers who have announced an intention to create camping and recreational facilities along the lakeshore should be encouraged to become part of the larger themed development (see Section 6.5).

(2) *Develop the attractive lake area southeast of Lac La Biche in a manner that diversifies the tourism product and conserves the natural resources of the area. This means that:*

(a) Private developers should be given the opportunity from the outset, to develop all accommodation facilities. Developers should be encouraged to provide fixed-roof or platform tent accommodations as well as camping. Rental, food service and convenience store facilities should be provided on-site (where feasible).

(b) Activities that do not depend upon harvest of fish and wildlife populations should be encouraged. The proposed trail and canoe network is particularly attractive. However, economic benefits of this kind of development will be greatest if accommodation and service facilities are located near access areas.

(c) The establishment of a canoe circle route is particularly attractive because it will be unique in Alberta, and will recreate elements of the fur trade history of the area.

(d) Access into Touchwood Lake and the Jackson - Kinnaird Lake complex should draw visitors through the town of Lac La Biche.

(e) Serious consideration should be given to developing strategies that recoup local expenditures from adventure tourists such as fishermen, hunters, canoeists, and

wildlife viewers. In particular, outfitters should be given support in establishing guide/outfitter services that cater to a wide range of adventure vacations.

(3) *Broaden the range of recreational opportunities with emphasis upon non-consumptive activities.*

The development of all season trail systems, adventure guiding services, fixed-roof accommodations that cater to "get-away" vacations and heritage tourism sites will attract new market segments and keep visitors in the area longer. Attractive adventure opportunities that do not require consumption of wildlife resources should receive priority consideration.

(4) *Diversify the range of accommodation, with emphasis upon providing fixed-roof accommodation and a full range of attractive camping opportunities.*

The increased range of accommodation, particularly fixed-roof opportunities near lakes is needed to attract new market segments and to extend the tourism season, and the length of stay. Deluxe fixed-roof accommodations will be most feasible near Lac La Biche, while more primitive cabins may serve the area to the southeast.

(5) *Develop the heritage attractions in the area.*

Portage La Biche and an interpretive display near the site of the Hudson's Bay post would be superb additions to the range of activities available at Lac La Biche. The restoration of the Lac La

Biche Mission would also provide an important addition to the tourism product. The Mission attraction will be improved if ways can be found to include lakeside recreation and to include interpretation of the early role of the mission in the 19th century.

(6) *Extend the tourism season.*

The development of all-season trails in the Jackson - Kinnaird Lake complex, and in the Caslan sandhills will help extend the season. The development of a snowmobile route should be seriously considered. The provision of fixed-roof accommodation for vacationers will also support a longer season. The hosting of cold weather events such as cross-country ski events and winter festivals will also be helpful.

(7) *Attract new markets into the area.*

If trails and recreational opportunities like the proposed canoe circle route are developed to cater to committed markets, then people will be induced to travel further to the area. Touring vacationers and Edmontonians seeking a "get-away" vacation could also be attracted.

3. Roles of the Participating Sectors

Private sector investment in the area is necessary, if the tourism industry is to be sustained over the long term, and if the industry is going to create regional economic stimulation. The private sector should be given significant encouragement to undertake the development of all accommodations, as well as services providing food, retail goods, outfitting, and adventure guiding to

tourists. It should be recognized that many accommodation services will not be economically viable if the private operator has to pay for infrastructure costs such as road and utility development. However, the long term cost of site operations will still make private sector operation preferable to public sector operation.

The provincial government has already helped stimulate tourism in the area through the Community Tourism Action Program and the Team Tourism Program. The support of plans such as this one will also be stimulative and help create coordination and clarify priorities.

However, many parties are looking to the provincial government to support tourism development in the area. This can best be done by:

- (a) Creating a circle canoe route and a trail system.
- (b) Managing the natural resources in the area for long term enjoyment.
- (c) Improving the access and utility servicing at several lakes in the area.
- (d) Creating an attraction along the shores of Lac La Biche by supporting the development of waterfront trails, scenic drives, and themed interpretive signs.
- (e) Supporting the development of accommodation through planning and feasibility assistance, through the allocation of long term leases, where reasonable, and through marketing assistance (Team Tourism).

- (f) Supporting the development of heritage tourism sites - especially Portage La Biche and the Lac La Biche Mission.

The federal government has already partially supported the restoration of the Lac La Biche Mission. Further support should be provided for this site. As well, the federal government could assist with the funding of a wharf on the shoreline adjacent to Lac La Biche.

The Town of Lac La Biche and I.D. 18(S) can become significant players in regional tourism development. Firstly, they should clarify that tourism is a high priority for them. Secondly, they should establish area structure plans or regional plans that support tourism development, and that clarify where tourism development can best be accommodated. Thirdly, they can directly support the development of lakefront trails on the shore of Lac La Biche, and also the trail-canoe area that was once historic Portage La Biche. The coordination of the involvement and contribution of all parties is a critical element that the town has already taken steps to address.

The town should also be commended for its initiative in creating a mural program to help beautify the downtown area, and for including a tea room and a public museum/gallery in the new waterfront civic centre.

Non-profit societies like the Mission Historical Society, and the Shaw Lake Cross Country Skiing Society are already making significant contributions to tourism in the area. The involvement of volunteers will continue to be critical to tourism success.

4. Market Development Strategies

The Lakeland study area has successfully attracted a large following of campers, fishermen, and hunters. However, the investment in infrastructure to serve these markets has been kept low and in many cases, the road systems and camping areas now require improvements.

Regional investments should be positioned to retain the current loyal market, but also to gradually diversify the product in order to:

- (a) Attract new market segments like the "get-away" vacation segment (from north-central Alberta), the touring vacation segment (from western Canada and from Yellow-head route traffic), and adventure tourists who are attracted to the area for non-consumptive activities, and for exclusive outfitted opportunities.
- (b) Extend the length of the tourism season.
- (c) Retain visitors longer and attract greater levels of expenditure from visitors.

It is a concern that many visitors to the area may currently be spending minimal amounts in the region while harvesting important natural resources. Strategies to capture more dollars from fish and game harvesting should be studied.

The area currently lacks an image that is readily identifiable to potential visitors. It is recommended that the development of a theme, image, and

promotional strategy for the area be addressed relatively soon.

It is also recommended that some mechanism to coordinate marketing efforts for the area be established and that "cross-marketing" techniques be used to reinforce the attraction and diversity of the "Lakeland Experience". The use of historical references to the fur trade may provide a nationally famous foundation for the promotional program.

5. Conclusions

There is significant interest in developing the recreation tourism industry in the Lakeland area. If the area is developed prudently, and reasonable coordination occurs, there is reason to believe that tourism developments in the area can be viable and can generate regional economic benefits.

However, the conservation of the landscape and fish and wildlife resources in the area will be critical to long term success. It will be important that cautious management of these resources is a major concern in the planning and locating of tourism developments.

The area will be best served if a few growth markets can be identified and area developments can focus upon gradually diversifying the offering to serve them. Given that significant interest has been shown by the private sector in developing vacation accommodations, the public sector should place a priority upon developing complementary attractions such as the regional trail system, the Lac La Biche waterfront, tourist roadways, and historic sites. These attractions will begin to diversify

the attraction of the area so that private sector developers can cater to a broader (and more affluent) vacation market, and begin to create a range of fixed-roof resort accommodations.

It will be difficult to coordinate area development into phases, since many parties are participating. However, it is desirable that public sector initiatives are scheduled to support private investment. It will be most beneficial to the area if a focal attraction such as Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area can be designated, then current user facilities can be renovated, and then development along the shorelines of Lac La Biche can be stimulated. The development of heritage sites should be coordinated with area upgrading. Trail and canoe route development can proceed in concert with the emerging tourism service centre at Lac La Biche.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this destination plan is to describe tourism development opportunities, requirements, and strategies in the Lakeland area located 250 kilometres northeast of Edmonton, Alberta. It addresses this development opportunity in two ways: firstly, through the assessment of potential tourism generators in the area (see Section 1.2), and secondly, through the identification of opportunities and barriers affecting tourism development that the provincial government and others can positively influence.

This plan is intended to be used for tourism planning and to support decision-making about tourism development by elected officials, the private sector, Community Tourism Action Plan Committees, and non-profit groups. It is one of several commissioned by the Alberta Department of Tourism to identify the potential to stimulate tourism development in the province. The undertaking of this plan did not imply any specific commitments on the part of the Government of Alberta.

1.2 Tourism Generators

Alberta Tourism defines a tourism generator as: "A provincial/regional tourism generator is a resource (facility, attraction, activity, or event) which has distinct (tourism) market appeal and is capable of producing wealth (revenue) for the Province of Alberta on a sustained basis".

Generators provide a stimulus to trip planning and initiation, and create expenditures in the region over and above on-site visitor expenditures. Generators work best when they "anchor" a tourism image or grouping of services and attractions.

Within this study, tourism generators have been explored as one means of stimulating tourism development. The study assesses three categories of generators: lakeside accommodations, touring/trail/wildlife opportunities, and heritage tourism developments. It also describes potential tourism developments in Lakeland Provincial Park, which was announced by the provincial government during the study period. However, it also must be recognized that tourism development can be stimulated in other ways. The description of the generators in this report does not imply that any or all of these generators is a requisite to tourism development, but it does imply

that each would provide a possible means of tourism stimulation.

The area studied in this particular plan has been considered for tourism destination development for more than 15 years. The impressive concentration of high quality lakes and beaches in the area makes it a potentially attractive resource for vacationers. While the area has been relatively successful in attracting large numbers of campers and fishermen, tourism expenditures in the region are lower than many hoped for, and the tourism traffic is not currently growing.

1.3 Methods

The contents of this study are based upon both secondary and primary research. Secondary sources included Community Tourism Action Plans, Zone Marketing Plans, Canadian and provincial tourism data, reviews of previous generator/destination resort studies, and analyses of information about comparable areas or developments. Further market perception information was gathered in focus groups conducted in the city of Edmonton. This information was supplemented by interviews and meetings with representatives of municipalities, tourism zones, economic development authorities, proposed developments, and operating tourism services. (See Appendix 8)

1.4 How to Use This Study

The study is divided into seven chapters to facilitate reference use. Each chapter provides a concise overview of the research information and specific observations intended to help decision analysis. If you require more

detailed research information or data, please refer to the appendices. There are several maps included with the report. These are intended to help the reader locate specific sites and visualize proposed developments. If you require only a brief overview of the information, refer to the Executive Summary, Chapter 4, and Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

Refer to Figure 1 for Locations

2.1 Definition of the Study Area

The study area encompasses an area which includes the largest concentration of high quality recreational lakes in Alberta. It is located near Lac La Biche, approximately 250 kilometres northeast of Edmonton.

The study area boundaries are the same boundaries used by the Regional Economic Development Committee (R.E.D.C.) located in Lac La Biche. These boundaries have been used previously for economic and tourism studies in the area, and include the majority of proposed tourism development sites.

• Population

The study area includes approximately 6,100 square kilometres; the total population within the study area is estimated to be 11,000 people. Almost 7,000 people live in the urban areas. Thirty-seven (37) percent of the population is concentrated in Lac La Biche. The remaining population is located within 12 communities (including

three Indian Reserves and two Metis Settlements). The rural areas of Improvement District 18 (South) within the study area are estimated to include approximately 4,000 people in total.

2.2. Service Centres

There are few service centres. The primary one is the town of Lac La Biche where the majority of retail and government services are available. The town offers regional retail, accommodation, health, social, and educational services. Other smaller communities include the villages of Plamondon and Caslan, where limited local services are available. There is also a local store which serves tourist traffic at Rich Lake.

2.3 Natural Features

The "Lakeland" study area legitimately derives its name from the large number of lakes included within its boundaries. A previous tourism study of the area entitled "Tourism Lac La Biche Country" (1985), was completed by the local Blueprint for the Future Committee. It indicated that there were in excess of 150 lakes within a 60 kilometre radius of Lac La Biche. Most of the lakeshores are provincial public land and have little tourism development. Three lakes - Lac La Biche, Beaver, and North Buck have been developed for tourism and offer

residential cottages as well as campgrounds and other amenities.

The study region is located on two drainage systems, the Athabasca and the Churchill. The area is Boreal mixed wood, characterized by a predominance of aspen and balsam poplar, with some white spruce, balsam fir, and jackpine plant communities.

The eastern portion of the study region contains important **recreational lakes**, which offer highly valued recreational fishing and boating opportunities, and include 70 percent of Alberta's class one beaches. The "Lakeland Sub-regional Integrated Resource Plan" (1985) described existing and proposed public land and resource uses in this area, and concluded that recreation and tourism were the most important potential uses. This plan received considerable public review and established the philosophical basis for the current plan.

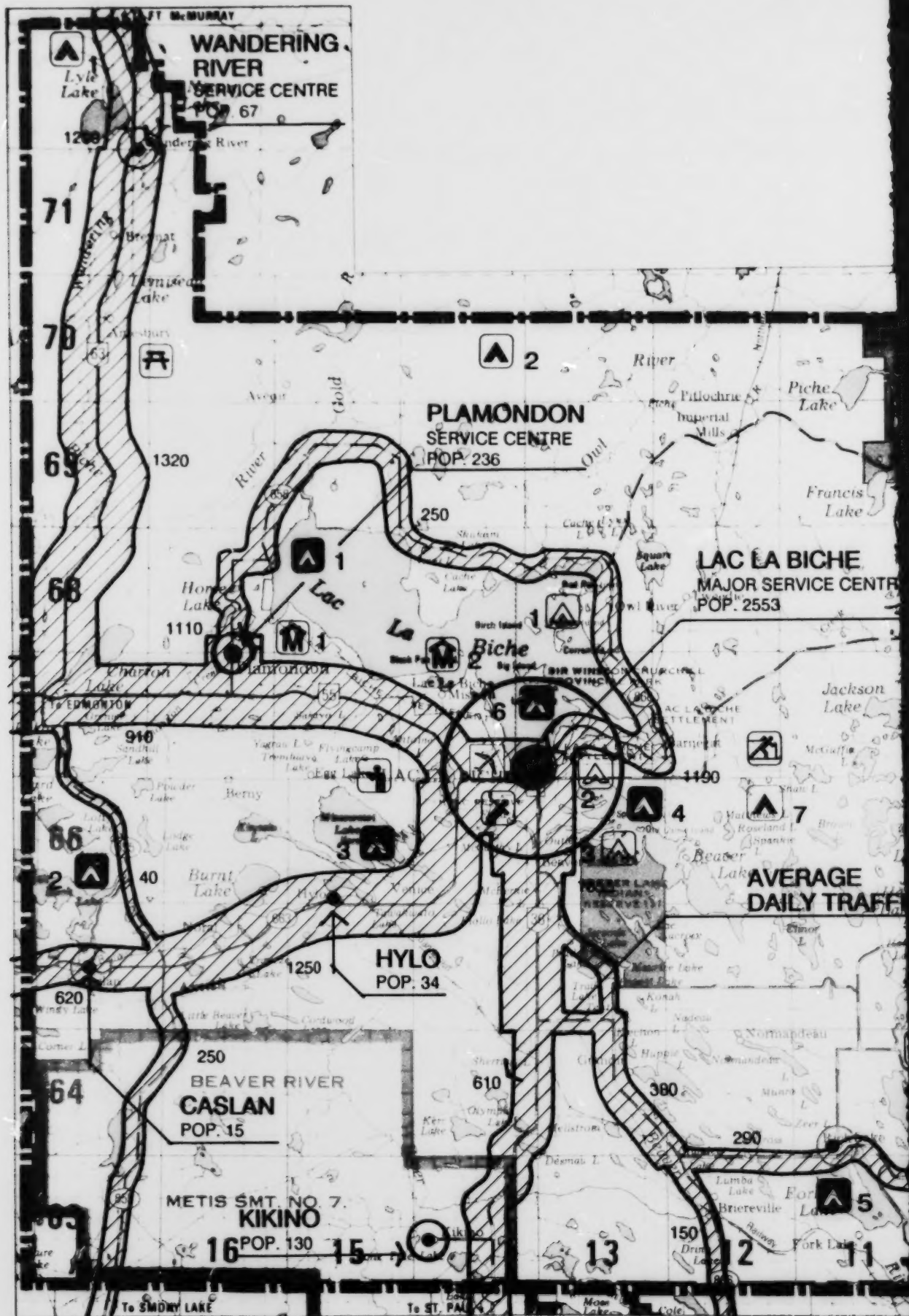
The region has long had a reputation as an important, high quality recreational **fishing** destination. The fishery includes a designated trophy pike fishing lake at Seibert Lake, in the eastern portion of the study area. Fish sought by recreational anglers include pike, walleye, perch and lake whitefish. However, competition for these species by recreational anglers, commercial fishermen and Indians have depleted the region's fishery. This issue has been under detailed study over the last two years by a local advisory committee appointed by the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. It is anticipated that greater resource management and additional regulatory actions will have to be taken in order to ensure the maintenance of a high quality fishery.

Wildlife within the study region is important for recreational hunting and viewing. Important big game species within the study region include moose, white-tailed deer, mule deer, and black bear. The Lac La Biche - Cold Lake area is considered to offer some of the best habitat for black bear in Alberta. The resulting popularity of the region for black bear hunting has caused a decline in the number of hunting permits available.

White-tailed deer populations have recently increased, particularly where areas of cleared agricultural land adjoin forested lands. (Moose and mule deer populations are low and the number of licences allotted for those species are few.) The St. Paul office of Alberta Fish and Wildlife anticipates that there will be strong interest in hunting in the region by hunters from outside Alberta during 1990, creating significant economic benefits for the area.

While the area is not a bird watcher's haven, there are some significant opportunities for **bird watching**. The number and variety of bird species associated with the abundance of lakes are significant. The Regional Fish and Wildlife Office reports that it is possible to see 21 species of warbler in Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park, east of the town of Lac La Biche. Many tourists are also attracted to the opportunity to view pelicans at that site.

The Caslan - Hylo sandhills in the southwest portion of the study region contain locally important aeolian sand dunes. While this area is environmentally fragile, it can be managed to provide a range of recreational activities. The area is currently popular for berry picking.





LEGEND



PROVINCIAL PARK CAMPGROUND

- 1 Plamondon Beach Recreation Area
- 2 North Buck Lake Recreation Area
- 3 Missawawi Beach Recreation Area
- 4 Beaver Lake Recreation Area
- 5 Fork Lake Recreation Area
- 6 Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park



ALBERTA FORESTRY CAMPGROUND

- 1 Wandering River
- 2 Mile 18
- 3 Touchwood Lake
- 4 Pinehurst Lake
- 5 Ironwood Lake
- 6 Seibert Lake
- 7 Shaw Lake Group Use



PRIVATE CAMPGROUND

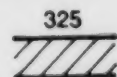
- 1 Diesel Owl Hoot Cabins and Campground
- 2 Youngs Beach Campground
- 3 Spruce Point Resort



MUSEUMS

- 1 Plamondon Museum
- 2 Lac La Biche Mission

TRANSPORTATION ROUTES



325
AVERAGE
SUMMER
DAILY
TRAFFIC



Wandering River Rest Area



Lac La Biche Shooting Association



Lac La Biche Golf and County Club



Lac La Biche Nordic Ski Club



SITE BOUNDARY



AIRPORT

TOURISM SERVICES AND USE INVENTORY

LAKELAND TOURISM RESORT PLAN

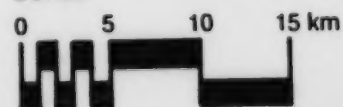
NORTH

MAY 1990

FIGURE



SCALE



1

informal hiking, equestrian and all terrain vehicle use.

The rolling landscape, mixed wood forest, and attractive lakes of the study area make it potentially attractive for a wide range of trail use and canoeing. Both suggest potential to attract adventure tourism to the area. However, current use levels for these activities are low compared to the activities previously mentioned.

• **Seasons**

During the summer season, tourists are attracted to the concentration of good quality lakes located within the study area. The peak summer season lasts 94 days (May 31 to September 1). The region generally has 80 to 100 frost free days, with a mean July temperature of 18 degrees Celsius and a mean January temperature of -27 degrees Celsius.

TABLE 1

**MEAN BEGINNING AND ENDING DATES
OF SEASONS AND SEASON LENGTHS
FOR LAC LA BICHE**

• Start of Winter:	October 30
• End of Winter:	April 20
• Duration of Winter:	173 Days
• First Day of Spring Shoulder:	May 5
• Duration of Spring Shoulder:	26 Days
• First Day of High Summer Season:	May 31
• Last Day of High Summer Season:	Sept. 1
• Duration of High Summer Season:	94 Days
• Duration of Autumn Shoulder:	58 Days
• Total Duration of Shoulder Seasons:	84 Days

Source: Environment Canada,
The Tourism and Recreation Climate
of the Prairie Provinces, 1976

There is interest in developing more winter recreational tourism in the area. The recent development of cross country ski trails at Shaw Lake, the initiation of a winter festival in Lac La Biche last year, and interest in developing snowmobile trail linkages through the study area to Fort McMurray are signs of an increased emphasis upon the winter season. Winter season duration is 173 days.

2.4 Historic and Cultural Features (See Figure 4)

The region contains important historic and prehistoric resources. The **Lac La Biche Mission** represents the early settlement and religious development of Northern Alberta, and is currently being partially restored. It is located in an attractive setting on the south shore of Lac La Biche lake. The Mission has been designated as both a Provincial and National Historic Site.

There is local interest in developing and interpreting the **Portage La Biche** fur trade route, which was used by such famous persons as David Thompson and Peter Fidler during the late 18th century. The Portage, located between the Beaver River and Lac La Biche, was one of two major portages between the Athabasca and Churchill River systems. Associated with the same theme, there are also several fur trade post sites on the shores of Lac La Biche.

Other historical opportunities include the Beaver Lake Mission, built in the early part of this century, and small museums at Plamondon and Hylo.

The historic **Lac La Biche Inn** was designated a provincial historic resource,

but was destroyed by fire in 1988. It has been replaced on its original site by a modern civic and cultural centre that interprets the original appearance of the inn.

The region has more than 50 pre-historic sites related to the early activities of man in the area since the last ice age. The shores of Lac La Biche and the Caslan - Hylo sandhills are particularly important for archeological resources.

The region is rich in its cultural mosaic. Native, Lebanese, French Canadian, Ukrainian and European cultures are visibly part of local social and economic community development. There has been increasing interest in displaying these cultures for residents and tourists.

2.5 Services and Infrastructure

The study area includes 180 hotel and motel rooms, 11 restaurants, and 975 campsites. There are also 1,555 cottage lots on seven lakes, of which 1,457 are developed (see Appendix 2).

Fixed roof accommodations in the area have been developed to cater to field crews associated with the petroleum, forestry and construction industries. Room construction and furnishing have been kept "basic and durable". Within Lac La Biche there are, however, a number of restaurants that cater to a wider range of clientele and offer a relatively wide range of food and service.

The retail sector within the region has not developed a wide range of products or services to cater to tourists. Most service centres offer convenience services to their regional customers, but

have few specialized tourism services. Several small convenience stores include outdoor recreational equipment such as fishing tackle as part of their available stock, and see these sales as a significant contributor to their cash flow.

Following their Community Tourism Action Plan, the Town of Lac La Biche has begun painting wall murals depicting the history of the area on commercial downtown buildings. The business community has responded positively to this initiative.

• Highway Access

The area is served by several highways (55, 36 and 663), which receive moderate through traffic. However, Highway 63, which passes through the undeveloped eastern end of the study area, carries a relatively high volume of traffic to Fort McMurray. As this trip is a long one, the town of Lac La Biche is often used as a stopover point along this route.

All of the major highway routes noted have been (or will soon be) paved. Highway 55, the "Northern Woods and Water Route" will be paved from Manitoba to British Columbia as of this year, and will provide an important tourism link between Cold Lake, Lac La Biche and Athabasca. Traffic on each of these routes increases in the summer compared to average annual daily traffic (see Appendix 1).

The majority of traffic using the main routes into and within the region are passenger vehicles. In a recent survey by Alberta Transportation, approximately seven percent of the vehicles were recorded as "recreational

vehicle". This is a relatively low percentage when compared to major tourism routes such as the Bow Corridor (Trans-Canada Highway, west of Calgary).

• Commercial Carrier Access

The study region is served by regularly scheduled passenger bus service from Edmonton to Lac La Biche six days per week.

Although there are no regularly scheduled commercial aircraft services, Lac La Biche is serviced by an excellent airport, capable of receiving large aircraft. Existing services at the airport include two charter companies offering small fixed and rotary wing aircraft for industry, commercial and medical uses primarily.

• Rail Service

Passenger and freight service by rail was discontinued in 1988.

2.6 Existing Recreational Visits

The 1988 Canadian Travel Survey (Canadian Visitors Only) estimated that there were 1,031,000 tourists that travelled to the whole of the Tourism Zone (Zone 6) during that year (n.b. this zone is much larger than the study area). Of those visits, 958,000 (92 percent) were Albertans, the majority of whom (62 percent) originated from Edmonton. The accompanying table indicates other important measures of this tourism traffic.

The 1982 Alberta Non-Resident Travel Survey for the Lakeland Tourism Zone identified the majority of out of province visitors to the zone as coming

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTION OF TOURIST TRAVEL,
WITH LAKELAND (ZONE 6) AS THE
MAIN DESTINATION

		ALBERTANS
Origin of Visitors		
Edmonton		62%
Other Alberta		25%
Other Canada		27%
U.S.		14%
Other Foreign		7%
Purpose of Visit		
Visit Friends & Relatives	30%	30%
Pleasure	29%	28%
Business/Convention	29%	29%
Average Distance to Destination (kms):	284	227
Activities Participated In During Trip		
Visit Friends & Relatives	50%	50%
Shopping	18%	16%
Sightseeing	•	8%
Dine at High Quality Restaurants	•	9%
Participate in Sports/Outdoor Activities	•	12%
Hunting or Fishing	•	13%
None of the Above	27%	27%

Source: 1988 CTS, Statistics Canada, Travel Alberta

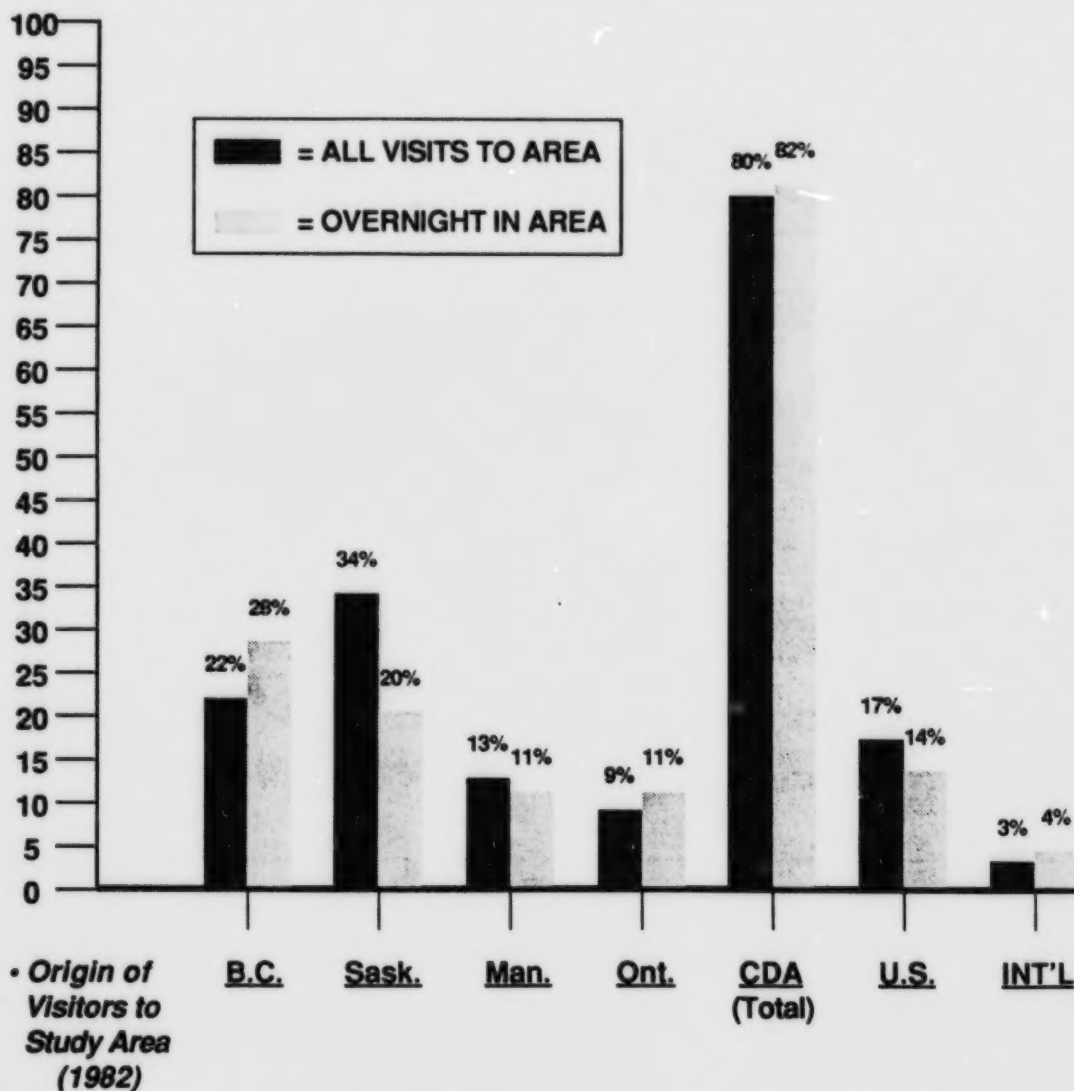
from Canada. Western Canada accounted for 69 percent of the Canadian visitors travelling to or through the tourism zone. Of those Canadians with Tourism Zone 6 as their main destination, 76 percent were from western Canada. Listed activities of the visitors included sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, relaxing, shopping, camping, visiting museums, picnicking, attending special events, attending or participating in sporting activities and fishing.

• Camping and Picnicking

Provincial campsites operated by Alberta Recreation and Parks and the

Alberta Forest Service within the study area, had over 47,000 camper party nights of use in 1988. This represented accommodation at 10 campgrounds that included

CHART 1
1982 ALBERTA NON-RESIDENT TRAVEL SURVEY
TRAVEL TO ZONE 6 (LAKELAND)



Source: 1982 Alberta Travel Non-Resident Travel Survey
(Zone 6)

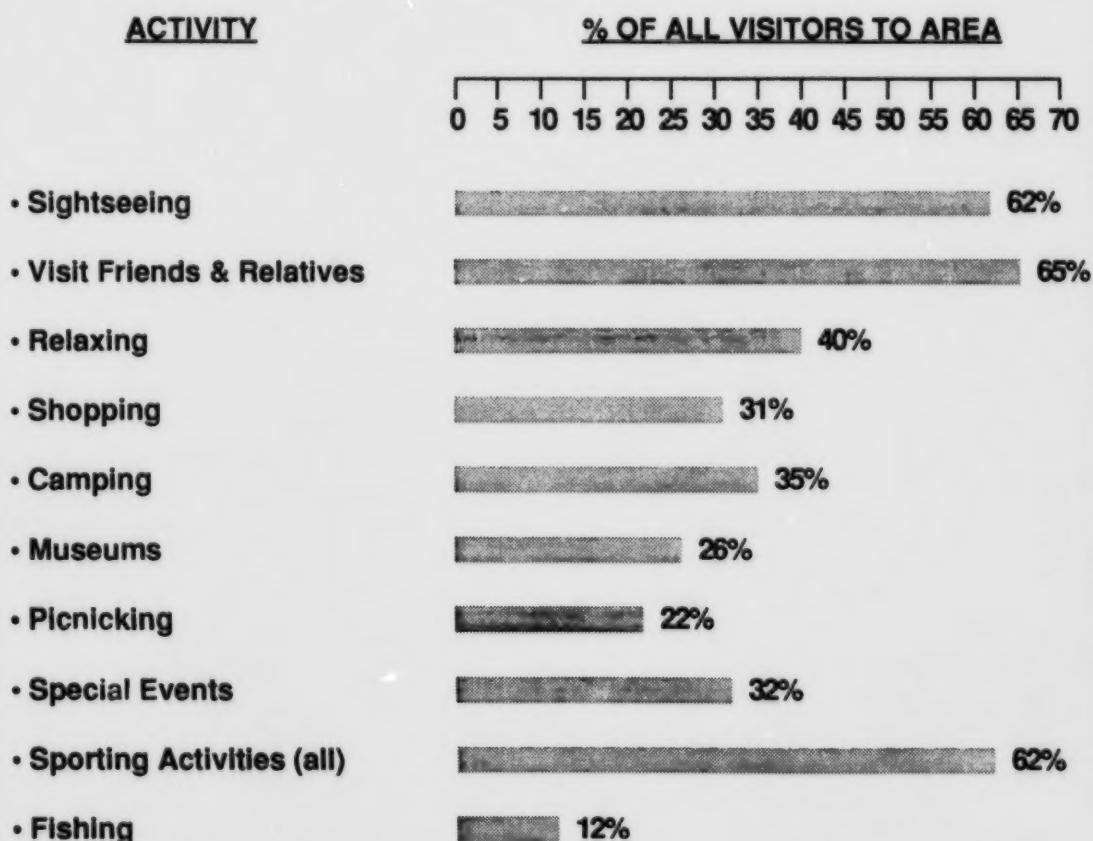
675 campsites (see Appendix 2). There are 975 existing campsites in 16 campgrounds in the Lakeland Tourism Destination Resort Plan study area. Six of the campgrounds are operated by the Alberta Provincial Parks Service, five by the Alberta Forest Service, one by Alberta Transportation, one is a municipal campground and three of the campgrounds are privately operated. The Forest Service sites have recently been handed over to the Department of Recreation and Parks.

The Minister of Recreation and Parks has recently announced his intention to develop Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area in the eastern portion of the study area. This development, along with several intended private sector developments in Lac La Biche and elsewhere, is expected to significantly increase the available number and range of campsites over the next five years.

Camping is a popular activity in the area, although government statistics

CHART 2

ACTIVITIES OF NON-RESIDENT VISITORS TO ZONE 6 - 1982 (Includes Lakeland)



Source: Alberta Travel Survey, 1982. Alberta Tourism

indicate that general campground use at the Provincial Parks in the region declined in 1989. Fishing is an important focus of campground visits in the study area. Estimates provided in the "Tourism Lac La Biche Country" study (1985) indicated that campers contributed over \$1.9 million into the regional economy in 1984.

Picnicking and day-use at Alberta Provincial Parks Service sites accounted for 23,645 visitors in 1988/89 (see Appendix 2). Local park managers estimated that the majority of these visitors come from within the study region and those communities within a one to one and one half hour drive (eg. Athabasca and St. Paul). Day users are primarily attracted by the opportunity for high quality beaches and related activities and fishing opportunities.

• Hunting and Wildlife Viewing

There were 25 licensed guides and outfitters operating within the study area last year (personal communication, regional wildlife biologist, St. Paul, Alberta). According to the 1987 listing of guides and outfitters, six operators were resident in the region. One guide offers horseback wilderness trips for wildlife viewing and camping within the eastern portion of the study area. The eastern portion of the study area is also becoming important for big game hunting by non residents. As the demand increases, however, the allocation of big game animals (notably black bear, moose, and mule deer) may be reviewed.

There is a shooting and archery range in the Lac La Biche area operated

by the Lac La Biche Shooting Association. The facility has a clubhouse, two trap ranges, rifle, hatchet, pistol and archery ranges, and biathlon trails. The facility is also popular with black powder rifle and pistol enthusiasts. The Association will be hosting a two day, 50 competitor provincial trap shooting competition in 1990. They plan to actively market the facility to other shooting clubs and the general public. They have plans to establish a 20 unit campground at the site.

• Winter Activities

Winter is a less active season, but still attracts visitors. Snowmobiling, cross country skiing and ice fishing, all attract significant numbers of participants. The Lac La Biche nordic ski club, based at Shaw Lake, has developed trails that are now part of the Alberta Loppet series. This will allow the club to hold regularly scheduled ski races in the Shaw Lake area. The club has 70 members and hosts 60 to 100 skiers on a good winter weekend. There has been interest expressed by snowmobile clubs in St. Paul and Wandering River for the establishment of snowmobile trail systems in the region. The approach is to develop the opportunity to have snowmobile excursions through the Lac La Biche area between Fort McMurray and St. Paul.

In 1989, the Lac La Biche Midwinter Festival was held. Proposed to be an annual event, the festival featured ice sculpting, cross country skiing, automobile ice racing, and a polar bear swim, and was considered a success. Further activities are planned in the future.

• Golfing

There is one golf club in the study area. The Lac La Biche Golf and Country Club, located between Lac La Biche townsite and Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park, is a nine hole golf course with grass greens. The course is being expanded to 18 holes, with construction to be completed during 1990. The course is located on the shores of Lac La Biche, in a very attractive setting. Open from May 1 to mid-October, it provided 10,000 rounds of golf last year. The golf course association is seriously considering the addition of a R.V. resort park.

• Special Events

There are a number of special events within the study region. Every summer Lac La Biche hosts the Lac La Biche Pow-Wow and Blue Feather Fish Derby. The event has been aggressively advertised in the Edmonton market, and attracts tourists from all over central Alberta. Also occurring within the region are the Native Perspective and Good Times Jamboree, the Beaver Lake Pow-Wow, Plamondon's Harvest Festival and Humdinger Daze. These events attracted in excess of 12,000 visitors in 1989.

2.7 Tourism Attitudes, Awareness, and Service

Tourism opportunities have long been recognized by local residents as important economic contributors to the region. The Lac La Biche Blue Print for the Future Committee commissioned an assessment of the tourism potential of the region in 1984. "Tourism Lac La

Biche Country" (1985) was completed based on the use of tourist surveys, a review of published tourism statistics, interviews with tourism operators and locally knowledgeable people and active public involvement and commentary.

Generally, people are positive about developing the tourism industry, although there is some concern about potential conflicts between the traditional local uses and the new tourism demand. Some residents are concerned that tourists will deplete the fish and wildlife resource in the area. However, given that these concerns can be overcome, there is evidence that all the communities in the study area are supportive of tourism development



CHAPTER 3

MARKET ANALYSIS

This section describes the existing and potential tourism markets for the study area and the likelihood that these markets will respond to tourism developments. Existing travel to the region is predominantly from within Alberta, specifically from Edmonton and north eastern Alberta. Although the region is on the "Northern Woods And Water Route" (Highway 55), which has been identified as a tourism route through Western Canada, there is little evidence of extended touring vacations in the area.

3.1 Marketing Priorities and Strategy

Based upon the analysis that follows, it is apparent that the study area must expand its vacation markets. The following strategies describe the most likely means of expanding vacation expenditures in the area:

(i) Attract new market segments from Edmonton and north-central Alberta.

The most likely segments will be "get-away" vacationers, "adventure" vacationers, and "touring" vacationers. Affluent 35 to 45 year olds (i.e. "yuppies") are the most likely market for these opportuni-

ties, with reasonable potential to attract "empty nesters" and mature visitors for "soft adventure" and "get-away" offerings. The appeal for these markets will require attractive fixed-roof accommodation.

(ii) Attract visitors from more distant markets.

The greatest opportunities to attract more distant markets lie in (a) creating an appealing tour vacation opportunity for Yellowhead route travellers, and (b) creating exclusive guided adventure opportunities such as fishing, hunting, wildlife tours, and trail riding.

(iii) Extend the tourism "peaks" by attracting visitors at times other than summer weekends.

Since visitation is concentrated on summer weekends, it is possible to extend the "season" by attracting longer stays or mid-week stays, and by attracting visitors during the "off-season". Off-season attractions should be targetted around tour opportunities, guided opportunities and organized events. The development of indoor attractions will also create off-season interest.

(iv) Create increased expenditures from current markets.

If visitors are attached to retail/service centres, encouraged to stay for

longer periods, and given convenient access to retail/service areas, their expenditures will increase.

The following sections describe the rationale for this proposed market development strategy.

3.2 Market Size

The study region has a sparse local population base, although the population within a three hour drive is significant.

• Local Market

The local market includes those people that reside within the local trading areas for the communities within the study area. These people are year-round users of services and facilities in the area, and account for much of the "traditional" use of natural resources in the area. The local population is very small, approximately 11,000 residents. Growth in the local market area is currently relatively stagnant, with net losses in some areas and stronger growth in the Lac La Biche area. While it is possible that new resource initiatives will create significant local population growth within the area, it is estimated that growth over the next five years will not exceed three percent per year.

• North-Central Alberta Market

It is the size of the north-central Alberta market available to the study area that makes tourism developments here potentially feasible. This market area includes all residents living within a three hour drive of the study area. A population of over 1,300,000 is included

in this market area. More than 60 percent of the total secondary market lives within the Edmonton metropolitan area.

The secondary market also includes several other specific points of origin. Fort McMurray and area (population over 45,000) is an important market because this area is located closer to that centre than is any comparable tourism destination. The area located to the south and east (Smoky Lake, Bonnyville and St. Paul) includes a market estimated at almost 44,000. The area directly to the west (Athabasca, Westlock and Whitecourt) includes an estimated 55,000 persons. Farther to the south, there are potentially accessible markets located in the Red Deer area and the Stettler-Provost area. Although these markets have many competing destinations to choose from, together they include an additional 157,000 people, and they may find the Lakeland area attractive for summer vacations of two to five days in duration.

The secondary market is growing at an above average rate. The majority of this growth is concentrated in the Edmonton metropolitan area. On average, this market can be expected to grow at approximately 3.5 percent annually over the next five years. The Edmonton market is the predominant market for the study area, accounting for approximately two-thirds of all visitation. It is critical as a source of tourism expenditures in the area.

• Western Canadian Market

Within western Canada, there is a large market available that may access the area by private vehicle or by tour bus. Over the past decade, Alberta has



LEGEND

- PRIMARY MARKET
- .-.- SECONDARY MARKET

TOURISM MARKET PREFERENCE AREA LAKE TOURISM RESORT PLAN

NORTH

MAY 1990

FIGURE

NTS



2

been a frequent destination for visitors from all of the western provinces.

The location and characteristics of the Lakeland area suggest that most of the visitor interest will come from communities located along the Yellow-head Highway, and Highway 53 (the Northern Woods and Water Route). The estimated size of the market within Western Canada is 1,500,000. It must be recognized that most of this market has the opportunity to access northern lakes and historic areas in closer proximity than Lakeland. The successful attraction of this market will therefore require facilities, opportunities and resources that are viewed as superior to those closer to home.

• North America

Most North American travellers come to the area in their private vehicle, travelling westward along the Yellow-head Highway. Travel patterns to the city of Edmonton indicate that a significant amount of touring vacationers come via this route from Ontario and from the north central states (Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio). While most of these tourists use the Yellow-head route as a short route to a destination, an increasing percentage are likely to be attracted to tour into the Lakeland area.

As well, there is significant interest from the United States in guided hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities. Most of this interest seems to come from the north central states and from the Eastern seaboard (eg. Boston, New York, New Jersey). The development of "exclusive" private

opportunities such as a trophy lake lodge or a sportsman's lodge would extend the attractiveness of the area into these markets.

The management of Diesel Owl Hoot cabins (located in the northeast corner of Lac La Biche) reported that they have developed a regular following from the southern central United States (eg. Texas and Oklahoma). These visitors are apparently attracted to the quiet natural setting and fishing opportunities.

• Offshore Market

There is a limited offshore market for the kind of product available in the Lakeland area. However, interest may grow as the opportunity to "escape" to a secluded lake becomes more rare and more valued.

Currently, it is expected that offshore visitation will come primarily from two sources: visiting friends and relatives, and adventure seekers. The former group are largely brought to the site by their relatives within the secondary market area. The latter group are largely attracted by advertisements and trade show appearances sponsored by guides. It is estimated that the primary sources of overseas visitation will be Great Britain, Germany, and the rest of Europe. It is not anticipated that the offshore market will become a significant source of visitation to the study area. However, it may offer a major source of visitation to individual services and attractions that are targeted to specific niches such as birdwatching, trophy fishing, adventure tours, or historic sites.

3.3 Key Market Segments

Tourism market segments more specifically identify tourist groups within the geographic market categories described above. Segmenting allows operators of tourist attractions, events, and services to understand and respond to tourist needs more specifically and be more directed in their marketing efforts to increase tourism visitation.

3.3.1 Household Segments

The following market segments are described according to the social nature of the household of the vacationer:

• Families

The "families" segment includes all vacationers who live in a household where there are children living with adults (ages 20 to 45), and where the family members travel together. Extrapolating from the 1982 Alberta Travel Study and from the 1986 census, one can estimate that this segment describes between 36 and 40 percent of the vacation travellers to the study area. The "families" segment is expected to favour opportunities that interest the children as well as the adults, to prefer destinations that offer a range of opportunities, to plan their visit further ahead, and to be interested in convenience, services and educational opportunities. This segment is often price-sensitive. The size of this segment may decrease slightly in the future.

• Singles/Couples

This segment includes all vacationers who live in a household where

there are only adults (ages 18 to 45). Based upon the same sources estimated above, one can estimate that this segment describes approximately 20 percent of the vacationers coming to the study area. The "singles/couples" segment tends to seek social opportunities or opportunities for personal challenge or fulfillment. They often make vacation decisions on a shorter time frame than families and are less price-sensitive. This segment will offer growth potential if the right opportunities are provided (eg. "adventure" vacations).

• Empty Nesters Segments

The "empty nester" segment includes all vacationers who live in a household where there are only adults over 45 years of age, who have children that no longer travel with their parents. Recent trends have indicated that this segment is the most likely to choose vacations primarily based upon personal needs and perceptions, and to show little price sensitivity. This segment is likely to take longer trips, either on a touring vacation, or on an extended trip to a destination. It is estimated that approximately 10 percent of visitors to the area fall into this segment. The size of this segment is growing, and there will be increased demand for comfort and integrated tourism resorts.

• Mature Segment

This segment includes all adults over 55 years of age. Vacationers in this segment have, on average, the highest disposable incomes, but are also price sensitive. This segment is the most likely to be attracted to historical attractions, and also the most likely to

seek "quiet, but refined" accommodations. They generally prefer less development and activity than the younger segment groups. Based upon extrapolation of the 1982 travel study, it is estimated that about 20 percent of the area market falls into this category. The size of this segment is growing.

3.3.2 Vacation Segments

These segments are described on the basis of the trip purpose which has motivated the traveller to take vacation time within the study area:

• Camping

This segment includes all visitors that come to the area to indulge in camping and other outdoor pursuits. This has been the largest segment of the vacation market for the study area in the past, and this trend is expected to continue. Currently, there are over 46,000 camper nights spent in the area, suggesting that nearly 20,000 camping parties come to the area each summer for this purpose. The limitation on the impact of this travel segment has been the short camping season, the short average stay of campers (three days, usually weekends), and the limited market area that is attracted to the camping opportunities (less than three hours drive).

In order to realize economic growth from this market segment, tourism developments will have to address the limitations mentioned above.

• Fishing/Hunting

There has been a strong continued interest in fishing and hunting in the study area. These activities have drawn pri-

marily from a two hour travel market radius, although guided activities in the area have drawn from more distant geographic markets. Fishing and hunting are attractive in fall as well as summer in this area. There is also a significant interest in winter ice fishing. There are currently more than 30,000 angler trips into the area annually, and there is estimated potential for 3,000 to 4,000 hunters to be attracted into the area. It should be noted that the angler market overlaps significantly with the camping market.

It can be anticipated that fishing and hunting opportunities will continue to be attractive. However, it appears that the economic impact of the three hour market is practically realized, and that economic growth will require that fishermen and hunters are attracted from an extended market. Two concerns may limit the growth potential in these markets:

1. *The fish and wildlife resources are already under pressure, and may not support additional consumption.*
2. *The lack of "exclusive" access or targetted services may reduce the distance sportsmen will travel for this opportunity (i.e. exclusive access and services suggests a higher quality of wildlife resource and services, and a higher likelihood of satisfaction).*

• Touring Vacationers

Touring vacationers represent the largest potential vacation market from outside Alberta. These are people who travel to the study area by car or recreation vehicle, with the intention of seeking

out new and different experiences. They have no single focus, but instead are looking for a mix of vacation products.

There is no accurate estimate of the current numbers of touring vacationers, but the numbers are likely under 2,000 visitors. Although large numbers of these vacationers travel near the study area on the Yellowhead route, it is suspected that only a small percentage are attracted north. Tourism growth from this segment will require a significantly improved mix of accommodations, services, attractions and scenic roadways. However, there should be potential to triple the number of visitors within this market group.

• "Get-Away" Vacationers

There is an increasing demand for "retreat" type vacations, which offer couples, families, or small groups the opportunity to relax and escape the sources of stress and personal demands which they find become uncomfortable over time. These vacationers appear to prefer "comfortable" accommodation (which often translates into fixed-roof accommodation). They are attracted to places they perceive to have a relaxing and charming environment, and while they restrict most of their socializing to their own travel group, they expect other visitors to share their values and sensibilities. This market segment is emerging, and includes primarily people over 35 years of age, with above average incomes.

• "Adventure" Vacationers

This segment includes all those visitors who come to the area with the primary intention of seeking an outdoor

challenge. The area offers good potential for these vacationers, but so far has few services or attractions targeted to this audience. Over the past decade, only a small percentage of visitors have come to the area for adventure. The development of trail opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, off-road vehicles, horse-back riding and skiing would cater to this market and increase the attraction of the study area. It is possible that this market could grow to 30,000 visitors within five years. This represents a phenomenal increase in visitation by this segment.

• Tour Groups

While the area has attracted increasing numbers of tours over the past several years, most of these have originated within the secondary market area. In order to attract tours from further afield, the area must demonstrate an improved tour "package" of attractions and services. The potential to attract specialized tours (eg. bird-watching) is expected to be moderately strong. There may also be potential to create a tour route that ties together the Lakeland area and Fort McMurray. With the development of historic and cultural attractions, at least 2,000 new visitors could be attracted annually.

• Visiting Friends and Relatives

Most of the travellers in this segment will come to the study area with household groups that originated in the secondary market area. It is estimated that about 10,000 visitors come to the study area annually for this primary purpose, and that this number could be at least doubled with attractions and services developed for this market.

These household groups will make the decision to come to Lakeland primarily on the basis of access to attractions which they perceive to be "interesting and convenient". This travel segment has been smaller here than in other areas, because of the small population base and the lack of scheduled attractions. One obvious growth market here would result from positioning Lac La Biche as an attractive "halfway" meeting area for households from Fort McMurray.

• En Route

En route vacationers are those who travel through the study area on their way to somewhere else and stop to enjoy the area. There is a strong opportunity to capture this sort of visitation from travellers to and from Fort McMurray (on Highway 63). If the Northern Woods and Water Route (Highway 55) becomes recognized as a through travel route, then there will be increased en route traffic from Saskatchewan and Manitoba. One can assume that less than 10 percent of these travellers stop within the study area. There is potential to expand both the number and length of stops, and to increase overnight stays from this market. Currently, this is limited by lack of well positioned services, lack of available fixed roof accommodation, and lack of "comfort stop" attractions.

3.3.3 Special Interest Markets

There is an opportunity to capture increased tourism business from the special interest tourism markets that are currently travelling to the study area, or could be encouraged to visit. These "special interest" groups include:

Wildlife Viewing: The opportunity to view many species of birds in this area is attractive to a limited market portion (eg. 21 species of warblers, ospreys, pelicans). Birding groups may be attracted at scheduled times of year (late spring, early fall). The presence of big game animals such as moose and black bears in the area will enhance this appeal if hunting pressure does not reduce their availability.

Sports Groups: The area already receives significant visitation from groups who come to the area for the challenge of playing team sports (e.g. baseball, curling). This potential can be developed further through the sponsoring of additional sports events, and through "specializing" in specific kinds of team sport opportunities. Currently, it is estimated that sporting events in the area attract approximately 3,000 visitors per year to the study area, with potential for this to expand to nearly 5,000 within five years.

The development of ski trails at Shaw Lake has demonstrated the strong potential to attract organized cross-country ski groups into the area, providing an important winter growth market. Currently, this market is uncultured, but is likely small (500 to 1,000 visitors). It is foreseeable that this market could grow to 2,500 visitors within five years.

Outdoor Events: The area attracts visitors to events such as the Blue Feather Fish Derby and Pow-Wow, the Native Perspective Good Times Jamboree, and the new MidWinter

Festival. There is no current estimate of the attendance at these events, but it would appear that area events currently attract at least 7,000 visitors from outside the region, with potential to expand to over 10,000 visitors within five years. A significant portion of this market are Indian and Metis people. The development of ski trails at Shaw Lake has demonstrated the strong potential to attract organized cross-country ski groups into the area, providing an important winter growth market. The further development of organized winter events such as loppets may expand winter tourism.

School and Seniors Tours: The combination of historical sites and interesting natural features provides appeal to school tour groups, and also to seniors tour groups. The development of historic sites (such as the Mission), and nature viewing areas will increase the number of visits from these groups. This is not a large market, but there is potential for these two groups to account for approximately 2,000 visitors per year, and the seniors market will continue to grow.

3.4 Market Perceptions

In order to assess visitor perceptions of the area, two focus groups were undertaken in Edmonton (see Appendix 3). The groups included both campers and users of fixed-roof accommodation who have taken an extended vacation in Alberta within the past twelve months.

The study area is perceived by its largest market (Edmonton) to be a good place for lakes, boating and wilderness. It is seen as moderately

attractive for being "quiet and remote", and offering good fishing. However, it does not have a clear market "image", and it is perceived to be lacking attractive fixed roof accommodations and adequate resort services. Much of the Edmonton market looks westward to the mountains and British Columbia when looking for a vacation resort with fixed-roof facilities.

The Edmonton market perceives that the area has the following deficiencies:

- poor weather
- inadequate roads
- poor beaches
- bugs
- little to see

Respondents who use fixed-roof accommodation are more critical of the area than are campers. It is interesting that these perceptions are not necessarily accurate, but still form a major part of the vacation destination decision.

3.5 Competitor Analysis

Several locations within two hours drive of the study area are beginning development to attract similar markets. These sites, and established vacation areas such as Banff and the Okanagan, are competitors:

(i) Athabasca (Blackstar)

A major destination resort aimed at drawing international visitors for adventure, get-away and conferences. This resort will offer deluxe services, and will attract an attractive growth segment of the north-

central Alberta market. It will also help create broader awareness of the area's attractions and resources.

(ii) Cold Lake (Marina)

The marina development at Cold Lake is intended to increase the attraction to boaters and fishermen. The success of this site would require that portions of the Lakeland market are shifted eastward by the greater facility and fishing opportunity.

(iii) Lesser Slave Lake (Marina/ R.V. Park)

A marina/R.V. park development is proposed for the south shore of the lake. This development is directly competitive with several proposed Lakeland developments.

(iv) Elk Point (Fort George/ Buckingham House)

The development of an interpretive centre is currently underway. This may attract visitors interested in fur trade history; however, it may also create an opportunity to promote touring vacations between Elk Point and Lac La Biche, and to mutually build interest around the fur trade theme and the David Thompson bicentenary.

(v) Southeastern British Columbia

The Okanagan and Shushwap areas of British Columbia attract a significant following from north-central Alberta, and are a major reason why Calgarians travel

westward rather than northward for lakes. These areas offer developed campgrounds, motels, marinas, and beaches, as well as warmer lakes, fishing, and recreational attractions.

(vi) Banff and Jasper

Most users of fixed-roof accommodation (in the get-away, adventure and touring segments) from Edmonton and Calgary see the Rocky Mountain resort areas as "the place to go", and do not perceive an equivalent opportunity in the Lakeland area.

3.6 Other Factors

• Conklin Road

The opening of the Conklin Road north of Lac La Biche will extend the tourism appeal of the area, by making another desirable lake, Christina Lake, more accessible, and by opening up a touring/outdoor sports area. The road also offers an alternate route to Fort McMurray.

• Highway 55

Highway 55 is already posted as the "Northern Woods and Water Route". Paving of the highway should be completed within several years. If this is followed by an awareness marketing program, this should significantly increase enroute and touring vacation traffic through the area.

• Lakeland Tourist Zone

The Lakeland Tourist Zone has recently begun to develop a more aggressive marketing program through the Team Tourism program. If the representatives from the study area get involved in this program, and improve the image and marketing of the area, this will pay off in increased visits to the area.

• David Thompson Bicentenary

The Bicentenary celebration of David Thompson's historic visit to Lac La Biche in 1798 is coming in only eight years. This will provide a significant marketing opportunity, if the area has developed a fur trade attraction by then.

• Cultural Attractions

The area has an unusually rich mosaic of cultures, and many of these cultures are interested in being more visible to the community and tourists. If events and offerings related to these rich cultures are developed, tourism will be stimulated.

• Forestry Development

The Lac La Biche forest currently has one of the lowest rates of harvest in the province. If the harvesting of aspen is approved and becomes economically attractive, the level of local employment, population growth and forest harvesting will greatly increase. This increased activity could create conflicts between the needs of vacationers and those of forestry operators. However, with adequate coordination and planning, both activities should contribute a fair share to regional economic growth.

REGIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TOURISM GROWTH

The potential of the study area as a tourism destination has long been considered because of the unusual concentration of scenic lakes and beaches. However, while the tourism business has developed as a noteworthy component of the regional economy, it has never become the major factor many expected. Instead, the area has attracted a dedicated following of tourists from Edmonton and northeastern Alberta who return relatively frequently to enjoy the area.

The staples of the local economy are oil and gas, government services, forestry, and agriculture. As a result, most services and retail outlets cater to the needs of field workers and local residents, although some see "tourists" as a worthwhile part of their income. The main problem with regional tourism income is that it is largely restricted to only four months of the year (May to September), and is highly dependent upon weather.

The majority of vacationers are (a) summer campers, and (b) hunters and fishermen. Most of their purchases are made during a limited period of the year,

and they often purchase only food, gas and limited supplies in the area. An increase in expenditures by recreational tourists in the area will require significant changes in attractions, services, attitudes and promotion.

4.1 Tourism Attractions

The primary tourism attractions of the Lakeland area are: (a) scenic, recreational lakes; (b) fish and wildlife resources; and (c) significant history. None of these attractions has been significantly developed at this time.

The lake resources of the region have some very significant features to offer: fishing, scenery, and class one beaches. However, the challenge of creating a significant tourism industry around these resources is to (a) attract longer visits (i.e. destination trips and touring trips, as opposed to weekend trips), (b) attract visitors from farther away, and (c) attract visitors over a longer season (i.e. outside the May 31 to September 1 "peak" season). A further challenge is to attract more local expenditures from these tourists.

In order to capitalize upon the lake resource, further development of the range of accommodation is needed. In particular, there is a need for fixed roof accommodation in a lakeshore setting. There is also a need for lakeside facilities

that are targetted more specifically to potential users of the area such as fishermen, hunters, birdwatchers and outdoor adventurers. Any future fixed-roof tourism developments must be able to offer a wider range of lake and land activities, and touring opportunities, in order to attract destination traffic.

Camping accommodations could be improved and the numbers of visitors increased if the public campgrounds in the area were upgraded and expanded. Major maintenance of facilities could possibly be improved if user fees were charged at market rates. However, the traditional users of Alberta Forest Service campgrounds have been conditioned to free accommodation, so use levels will initially drop if the price is raised to a nominal user fee such as \$5.00.

The range of camping accommodations available could be enriched by the addition of a more serviced campground in an accessible lakeside setting. The development of this kind of campground should be researched to ensure that it will appeal to new markets that do not currently use the area. The purpose of the development should clearly be to attract new segments of the Edmonton market, and to attract touring vacationers from farther abroad.

The heritage attractions of the area are significant and could enrich the appeal of the area enormously. In particular, the fur trade events that unfolded in this area have broad appeal to markets well beyond the secondary market. However, there is currently little evidence of the fur trade to be seen in the area. The history of the area should be made accessible and interesting to tourists.

Ideally, this colourful history should be evident in a series of historical sites and attractions, and the historical theme should be evident in shops and services.

The current restoration work on the Lac La Biche Mission is a positive sign that historical attractions are being considered. However, it would be unfortunate if only a single historical site is developed. The area will benefit more if the important historical theme is evident at a number of sites, and if complementary historical sites are marketed as a touring opportunity.

While it will be difficult for historical sites in the area to be self-sufficient, they should be considered an important part of the tourism mix, and valued for their ability to attract markets other than campers/fishermen, and for their potential ability to expand the market reach and visitation season.

4.2 Tourism Services

There is a significant opportunity in the area to create accommodations and restaurants that will appeal to an expanded tourist market and encourage longer stays. This would require improved locations that appeal because of scenic views, lake access, or historical significance. It would also require a new sense of thematic decor and quality service. We believe that this improvement in services is currently financially viable and competitive in the Lac La Biche area. Elsewhere, it would have to be packaged with other attractions to be viable. There is also a need to increase the range of retail goods available, and to make the presentation of those goods more appealing to tourists. While

merchants have recently begun to expand their range of goods and services to cater more directly to tourist requirements, more encouragement in this area is required. Most retail outlets would benefit from (a) improved storefront presentation and displays, (b) improved range of goods, and (c) improved quality of service. These improvements will likely require a combination of increased evidence of tourist demand, improved training and support, and a source of investment capital.

There is an opportunity to expand the range of accommodation in the area through the development of bed and breakfast or farm vacation opportunities. Although these kinds of offerings would currently struggle to be viable, they will become feasible when there is further development of historic sites, scenic opportunities, and lakeside attractions. Bed and breakfast would be best located in proximity to a historic site, or lake/beach access. The farm vacation would profit from this sort of location as well, but could also benefit if the farm is particularly scenic, unique or historic.

The area could potentially attract "executives" to the area if it offered a summer management development school. The location and the Alberta Vocational School facility provide a unique combination of excellent residential facilities, classrooms, and recreational/sports facilities that would be appealing to executives. The school could differentiate itself from the many management development schools by concentrating upon current and future issues targetted to a single industry (eg. forestry, agriculture or petrochemicals) each summer.

4.3 Tourism Infrastructure

Recent investments in tourism infrastructure of the area such as the upgrading of Highways 36 and 55 have made the area more attractive to visitors. In addition, the presence of the attractive buildings and facilities at the reconstructed MacArthur Inn and the Alberta Vocational College in Lac la Biche offer excellent potential to appeal to tourists. However, for the most part there are significant requirements for infrastructure investment to attract and sustain tourism interest.

a) Road Improvements:

Recently, the provincial government indicated that it may improve roads to several of the most attractive lakes in the area. Existing roads are fair quality gravel surface, and upgrading will require some reconstruction, some realignment, and some resurfacing (dependent upon the kind of tourists each location hopes to attract). As well, there is high potential for scenic touring in parts of the area, but this will require additional roadside signing, pull-offs, and paving. Improved access to sites such as Pinehurst Lake, Elinor Lake, and Seibert Lake would be a significant stimulus to private sector development.

b) Trail Development:

There is an opportunity to develop trails in the area for several kinds of trail activity (bicycle, hiking, ATV, skiing). The presence of these trails would significantly extend the attraction of the area. The provincial government has already indicated support for trail developments in the Jackson - Kinnaird area

(which has the highest potential for this use). While these trails would be relatively extensive and would require a significant infrastructure investment and maintenance/supervision costs, they are also expected to increase the destination appeal of the area, and support the growth of "off-season" tourism, by attracting cyclists, hikers, cross-country skiers, and wildlife observers.

c) Boat Launching and Mooring:

Most of the lakes in the area have inadequate launching and mooring facilities. There is an opportunity to extend the attraction of the area through greater appeal to boaters. However, the development of launching and mooring facilities on most of the resort destination lakes (except perhaps Beaver Lake) would be required. The provincial government has reflected this need in its initial Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area proposal.

d) Waterfront Improvements:

Most of the destination resort lakes will require improvements of the waterfront to improve their appeal to a wider range of markets. The most significant opportunity of this sort is at the waterfront of the town of Lac La Biche, where a more cosmopolitan waterfront experience could be developed. However, all of the potential resort lakes require improved "beach" areas, and a setback area along the waterfront where scenic viewing, picnicking and fishing are possible. In many cases, the vehicle access to the waterfront area must be significantly changed or "hardened" to withstand projected use and resist serious shoreline damage.

e) Recreation Facilities:

There is an opportunity to extend the tourism season and overcome concerns about being "stranded" in the area in bad weather, by developing indoor public recreation facilities. These facilities would allow overnight and day use visitors to vary their activities to include potential indoor activities (eg. games, shows, eating, discussion, reading). At the time of writing, there were private sector proposals to develop increased recreation opportunities near Lac La Biche (eg. a proposed recreation centre including bowling, games area, and bingo).

f) Signs:

There is an opportunity to promote touring vacations in the area through improved directional and point-of-interest signing in the study area. This type of signing would create "scenic routes", and would attract new visitors to the area.

g) Utilities:

Several of the lakes that could provide tourism resort destinations lack utility servicing. The presence of electricity, improved water supplies and heating fuel would extend the appeal to "upscale" tourists and would extend the season as well. The provision of utilities at lakeside areas is likely to be a stimulus to private sector development.

h) Supervision and Maintenance:

If increased numbers of tourists are to be attracted to the area for adventure and sports in the lakeland backcountry,

there will be an increased need for supervision and maintenance services. These services will respond to the increased need for safety, law enforcement, resource management, and maintenance of facilities and grounds.

4.4 Tourism Marketing and Promotion

Currently, the study area has a limited appeal to the marketplace. Geographically, its market is restricted to the Edmonton - northeast market described previously. Categorically, its image appeals primarily to campers and fishermen. There is a significant opportunity to extend the appeal of the area to a larger market base.

One of the weaknesses of the Lakeland image is that it is extended to describe too many kinds of opportunities. The entire tourism zone is referred to as "Lakeland", and the range of opportunities in this area is not consistent. This contrasts with southern British Columbia, for example, where the "Shushwap" is differentiated from the "Okanagan".

Another weakness of the Lakeland image is its lack of graphic identity. Is this a "historical" image, a "rustic" image, a "sophisticated" image, or a "sports/adventure" image? There has been a mistaken assumption that the consumer knows what the area offers. In developing its image, Lakeland will have to be cautious to differentiate itself from its competitors. What can be said that makes this area different from Meadow Lake, Cold Lake, Lesser Slave Lake, Crimson/Sylvan/Gull/Pigeon, or even Shushwap Lake? The Alberta Provincial Parks Service is currently developing a graphic image for their intended

Lakeland development, which will hopefully be designed to work for the entire study area.

Marketing and promotion of the area can be significantly improved through development of a more targeted approach, and through increased coordination and private sector investment. All of these elements are encouraged through the Team Tourism program.

The development of wall murals, and the development of a winter festival in Lac La Biche indicate a new focus upon tourism in the area, and will greatly help to redefine the image and appeal of the area.

4.5 Tourism Attitudes, Awareness, and Hospitality

There is an ambiguous feeling about tourists in the area at the present time. In general, tourists are seen as a potential source of income for the area. At the same time, they are viewed as potential intruders into "our" lakes, facilities, and communities. This ambiguous perception shows up in the opinions people express about potential tourism development. It is also evident in the way tourists are treated in the area.

Many tourists receive a caring, friendly and helpful greeting from local residents. Some do not. The inconsistency of hospitality and service quality is a potential barrier to tourist growth in the area. If more emphasis can be placed upon training and awareness development in the community, the consistency of tourism hospitality and service will improve.

The ambiguity of the community values and perceptions about tourism indicate that a public involvement effort preceding tourism development would be a worthwhile exercise. There is a need for the community to examine its development options, and to assess the benefits and costs of tourism. If the community chooses to embrace tourism development, attitudes and awareness will support improved hospitality and service.



ROLES OF PARTICIPATING SECTORS

Tourism is an industry that is highly market sensitive. It is a rapidly expanding world-wide industry, and competition for tourist spending therefore crosses international boundaries. Sites that establish themselves as tourism destination areas do so because all sectors work together in a cooperative fashion that allows these areas to respond to the tourist market in a responsive, innovative and effective manner.

Although tourism is ultimately successful because of the goods and services that can be sold to tourists by private sector businesses, the public sector has played a major role in the development of tourism destinations throughout the world. Once a tourism destination is established, the need for government support should be greatly reduced. However, the development of new tourism destinations generally requires active government support and investment.

5.1 Private Sector

The success of the tourism industry is ultimately dependent upon the skill and imagination of the entrepreneurs who offer services and goods to tourists. The

sale of these goods and services allows the area to attract visitor expenditures.

Local private investors have shown a willingness to invest in the tourism industry in the past, and are continuing to show a strong interest. The La Biche Inn, the Diesel Owl Hoot Cabins, and the Young's Beach Resort are examples of successful private sector investments in the tourism business. As well, many entrepreneurs have diversified their businesses to better capture tourism expenditures (eg. several mainstreet convenience stores and retailers who carry vacation needs and souvenirs).

However, the area still requires some significant private sector development in direct services to recreational tourists. Preferably, these developments should be near significant lake or historical resources.

There is evidence that the private sector is preparing to make these investments. Private investors are actively pursuing the development of a recreation vehicle campground and recreational complex on Lac La Biche. As well, landholders on Pinehurst Lake have expressed interest in developing accommodations for tourists. The Elinor Lake proposal is a further example of private sector interest.

In addition, private sector owners and operators can contribute enormously

by (a) improving the appearance and presentation of their facilities, (b) ensuring that service staff are trained in the art of customer relations, (c) targetting all or part of their goods to recreational tourists, (d) promoting themselves and the area to tourists, and (e) supporting quality and consistency in services.

5.2 Provincial Government

The provincial government has assumed a leadership role in tourism development, in order to accelerate the pace of tourism investment and success. However, this is a delicate role, and the province must ensure that tourism development proceeds in a manner that is compatible with private sector investment and community readiness and support. The government has already indicated an intention to "anchor" tourism development in the area.

The government can also support the development of the tourism industry in the study area by directly supporting the following important activities:

(1) Planning and Community Involvement

Proponents of tourism development, whether they represent communities, investors, or non-profit organizations, have demonstrated a tendency to overlook planning and strategic evaluation as critical requirements for success. This tendency to resist investments in planning may have been due to limited investment resources, or to a lack of understanding of the benefits of planning and community involvement.

The Lac La Biche Regional Economic Development Council and the Community Futures organization have both recognized the need for planning and community involvement in the study area. The government has shown support for these needs, by undertaking this plan, and by indicating a commitment to future community involvement.

As a result of government support, the town of Lac La Biche and I.D. 18 (S) have both undertaken Community Tourism Action Plans. Other communities in the area are in the process of also undertaking these plans. This community planning process has proven to be an excellent way to initiate tourism planning and community involvement.

Team Tourism has provided a process and funding for market planning. This sort of planning support is invaluable in building skills, as well as understanding, coordination and initiative of effective tourism development. If the region is to achieve its tourism potential, more of this kind of support will be required, particularly for the development of attractions in the area.

(2) Development of Attractions

The study area is lacking in attractions that are perceived to "be worth the trip" to the area. The creation of suitable attractions will require provincial government support, because the available land base is largely public land, and construction of suitable access roads (and trails) would be a significant infrastructure cost.

Investment in attractions in the area has been slow, because it will be

difficult to recover the investment through revenues. However, attractions in the area may well create significant regional benefits by generating off-site expenditures. It is therefore likely that the provincial government will have to play a role as a direct investor in attractions that are created in the area.

The province has recently announced its intention to establish Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area, which would create an attraction to the area for outdoor recreation vacations. This is a major initiative which would help establish an awareness of the area, and a motivation for visitors to come. In addition, the province has partially supported planning and restoration at the Lac La Biche Mission site, in order to create a complementary heritage attraction.

(3) Promotion and Marketing

The success of the tourism industry is heavily dependent upon effective market research, planning and promotion. Buyer behaviour must be constantly monitored and tourism operators must be highly responsive to changes in the marketplace. The development of a strong "image" has a significant effect upon the numbers of visitors attracted to an area.

Throughout the world, governments have become involved in the provision of market research, planning support, and promotion. In an internationally competitive business, it is a requisite that the operators of a given area share their data and strategies, and that they reinforce a specific marketing position in order to be successful. The provincial

government has played an important coordination role in this process, and has made catalytic investments in tourism marketing through Team Tourism and through support funding for tourism business marketing plans. This role is critical to the development of the Lakeland area and should be continued.

(4) Infrastructure Improvements

The Lakeland requires major infrastructure improvements (see Chapter 4.0) which will require provincial government investment. These range from roads to trails to lakeshore improvements.

It is unlikely that resort developments can proceed on lakes other than Lac La Biche, Beaver Lake or North Buck Lake without provincial government investments in infrastructure.

(5) Facility Operations and Services

Provincial government departments provide several services that are of critical importance to tourism in the area. Alberta Recreation and Parks operates six campgrounds in the area, and intends to create more in the area.

Alberta Forestry Lands and Wildlife operates campgrounds in the area, and provides vital services like fisheries management and forestry management which critically affect the tourism experience.

Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism provides advisory support to the management of the Lac La Biche Mission, and has contributed funding along with the Northern Alberta Development Council.

As well, the Alberta government operates the area liquor stores, which provide one of the top selling retail items for tourists in the area.

5.3 Federal Government

The Government of Canada also has a stake in developing a healthy tourism industry throughout Canada. However, this government's investments are predicated upon the ability of the site to attract visitors from outside the national borders. Since there has been little evidence of that ability in the Lakeland area, there has been consequently little federal tourism investment.

The federal government has contributed to the restoration of the Lac La Biche Mission site through its contribution to the Northern Alberta Development Agreement. The same source of funding has supported the development of other services and infrastructure in the area. The designation of the Mission site as a national historic site may invite further federal support.

As well, the federal government has played a major role in northern Alberta through the installation of marinas on major lakes. While it is unlikely that most lakes in the study area could qualify for federal funding for launch and marina facilities, it is possible that Lac La Biche could obtain this kind of support.

5.4 Local Government

There is much that local governments can do to help attract tourists to the Lakeland area. They can provide significant local leadership to encourage the development of the industry.

(1) Zoning, Bylaws and Approvals

Tourism developments often require a different approach than do residential and industrial developments. Their proximity to water bodies, their separation from other intensive developments, and their tendency to cross jurisdictions often makes approval more complex. Municipalities like the towns and the I.D. can foster tourism development by simplifying the process for development approval, and by developing a cooperative position on tourism development among themselves. The intent is to remove unnecessary barriers or frustrations.

(2) Infrastructure Development and Maintenance

Most towns in the study area would benefit from a "beautification" program that would make their towns more attractive to tourists. The Town of Lac La Biche has already begun an impressive program of mural painting aimed at this objective. It is desirable that municipalities in the area include the needs and perceptions of tourists in their infrastructure development and maintenance priorities.

(3) Promotion and Marketing

It is highly desirable that the municipalities in the study area coordinate their marketing and promotion activities. If all work together, then all will gain. The Lakeland area seriously needs to bolster its image as a tourism destination area, and this could be greatly improved, if all municipalities supported a single image for the area, and a single theme.

5.5 Not-For-Profit Sector

The not-for-profit sector has already indicated a desire to play a major role in the development of tourism attractions in the area. The most noteworthy examples are the restoration work at the Mission site, and the development of the Shaw Lake trails. Projects such as these provide important tourism attractions, but offer limited potential for profit. They attract significant regional income, however. Not-for-profit groups provide an effective way to develop and operate these kinds of attractions for regional benefit. The volunteer investment they make is a critical part of regional tourism development.

5.6 Indian Reserves and Metis

The Indian bands of the area have indicated that they are interested in investing in the tourism industry. The Beaver Lake band has already developed a campground and is now interested in expanding the number of sites and the range of services.

At the northern end of the study area, the Heart Lake Band has begun to explore the potential to develop a campground and fishing resort. At the southern end, the Whitefish Lake Band has indicated an interest in developing cottages and trails.

The Indian bands and Metis settlements clearly have a significant contribution to make to tourism development in the area. They are viewing tourism as an attractive industry, and they have excellent natural resources to work with.



CHAPTER 6

POTENTIAL TOURISM GENERATOR DEVELOPMENTS

This report examines five categories of tourism developments which could be pursued as part of the development of a tourism destination in the Lakeland study area - Lakeside Resorts, Adventure Opportunities, Heritage Attractions, Lac La Biche Waterfront, and Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area. Each of these categories is assessed according to its value in meeting the criteria outlined below.

6.1 Criteria For Success

It is recognized that the success of tourism development in the area cannot be judged by a single criteria (regional economic benefit) alone. Representatives from several government agencies met during the development of this plan to describe the criteria which should guide tourism development in the area. These criteria were later confirmed at a public meeting in Lac La Biche (see Appendix 8 for meeting dates and participants). The criteria are listed in Table 3 on the following page. The emphasis placed upon environmental protection is a very significant factor which any developer should keep in mind.

6.2 Lakeside Resorts

Lakes provide the most attractive natural feature within the study area, and are therefore the most likely sites at which to provide tourist-oriented development. Albertans generally perceive that they have too little access to lakes, boating, and lakeshore experiences, and so there ought to be a significant provincial market that would be attracted to lakeside developments in the study area.

In other locations built around lakeside attractions (e.g. the Okanagan and Shuswap areas of southern British Columbia), the attractions have consisted principally of a range of accommodations supported by food services and recreational services. Successful locations have offered an attractive beach with swimming and recreational boating opportunities, and/or excellent fishing opportunities. This chapter explores the potential for similar developments within the study area, adapted to the character of the area and its users.

All of the accommodation developments listed in this chapter have been assessed using the criteria described in Section 6.1.

• Attractiveness of Lakes

The lakes within the study area are attractive to recreational tourists primarily

TABLE 3: Criteria To Guide Site Selection For Tourism Development in the Lakeland Area

<u>Market Criteria</u>	<u>Heritage Sites</u>	<u>Adventure Opport.</u>	<u>Lakeside Resort</u>
• Attracts Users From Beyond Regional Market	9	*	*
• Proven Markets	8	9	9
• Commercial Development	*	6	9
• Visitor Management Plan	*	8	*
• Proven Management/Business Plan	7	*	8
• All Season Attraction	7	*	*
• Attractive Theme/Concept	7	*	*
• Integrates Recreation/Tourism Opportunities	5	*	*
• Users Will Pay Operating Costs	4	*	10
<u>Social/Community Criteria</u>			
• Community Support for Development	9	10	8
• Compatibility With Community Investments & Traditional Use	6	9	8
• Maintains Existing Public Access	*	9	9
• Does Not Impact Negatively on Heritage Resources	10	7	6
• Conformity With Existing Land Use Plans	7	*	*
• Creates Opportunities for Regional Business Community	6	6	6
• Does Not Create Perception of Overcrowding	*	6	4
• Integrates Multiple Uses	*	5	*
• Capable of Regulating Use	*	5	*
• Royalty For Use of Natural Resources & Traditional Rights	*	4	6
<u>Environmental Criteria</u>			
• Does Not Jeopardize Renewable Resources	*	*	10
• Consistent With Integrated Plans (Public Acceptance)	*	*	9
• Enhances or Protects Environment	10	*	9
• Suitable Lake Resources are Available	*	*	8
• Aesthetically Compatible With Surroundings	8	*	8
• Does Not Impede Current or Projected Energy Resource Activities	*	*	6
• Emphasizes Non-Consumptive Use	*	7	5
• Safety of Users	*	6	*
<u>Infrastructure Criteria</u>			
• Offers Authentic Historical Buildings or Features	10	*	*
• Integrates Commercial Sales Facilities	8	*	*
• Tie-In to Other Tourism Opportunities	8	8	8
• Ease of Public Access	7	4	9
• Integrated With Regional Tourism Theme & Priorities	7	*	*
• Minimize Public Infrastructure Cost	6	6	8
• Opportunity to Expand if Demand Increases	*	*	4

* Indicates that criterion was not considered necessary for this category.

10 = High Importance; 1 = Low Importance

because of the fishing opportunity they provide. Tourists in the Edmonton area perceive that the swimming and waterfront activities are hampered by a lack of beaches (which is not true), and by mediocre water quality. The scenic quality of the lakes is moderately attractive to tourists, but most tourists lack experience with this area.

These kinds of observations indicate that the presence of fishing opportunities will be of significant importance to tourism development in the area. They also indicate that successful developments in the area will offer attractive recreational opportunities, and that the scenic resources will not be sufficient to create a sale.

Range of Accommodations

There is a large range of potential accommodation developments that would be possible within the study area. In order to simplify analysis, these have been categorized into three ranges: *primitive*, *moderate*, and *deluxe*. These categories are described in greater detail in the descriptive sections that follow.

(1) Primitive Range

This range includes developments that offer a primitive "backcountry" experience, typified by unimproved road or trail access, water pump, and no electricity or gas. Typical examples of this range include primitive campgrounds and unserviced cabins.

Currently, there are several campgrounds in the study area that fall within the primitive range (e.g. Pinehurst Lake, Touchwood Lake). Most of these were

operated by the Alberta Forest Service. It has largely been these campgrounds that have built the existing summer flow of tourists into the study area.

When asked what they would most like to see in the study area, campers indicated that they preferred more of the same kind of campground. They suggested that they were drawn to the area primarily for the outdoor recreation and adventure, and that a primitive campground appealed to them for these purposes.

The advantages of primitive campgrounds are that they are relatively inexpensive to build and maintain, and that they offer the user a "back-to-nature" experience without commercial distractions. As well, users indicated that they were willing to access these kind of campgrounds on a gravel road, given that the cost of staying there is low.

Primitive campgrounds do not attract use in the off-season except for fishing and hunting, and they generally do not draw visitors from outside of the province. As well, they do not create major regional economic inputs, since they create minimal local employment, and stimulate the lowest amount of visitor expenditure.

Potential Locations

There are few physical limitations within the study area that limit the location of primitive accommodations. They can be located anywhere in the study area that has suitable ground conditions, since they require minimal servicing and infrastructure development. However, users are primarily interested

in remote lakeside locations, and generally expect that the lake will have good fishing.

**CASE STUDY ANALYSIS
OF BENEFITS AND COSTS
(16 Primitive Cabins)**

**FINANCIAL ESTIMATES
16 Unit Cabin Resort**

EXPENSES	
Capital Investment	
Buildings =	\$694,000
Furnishings & Equipment =	\$110,800
TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT =	\$804,800
Operating Expense	
Direct Expenses	
Wages & Benefits =	\$38,000
Maintenance =	\$14,200
Indirect Expenses	
Fees & Promotions =	\$12,700
Depreciation =	\$39,500
TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES =	\$104,400
REVENUE	
864 @ \$80/night (Peak Season) =	\$69,120
720 @ \$65/night (Shoulder Season) =	\$46,800
1,363 @ \$50/night (Low Season) =	\$68,150
TOTAL REVENUE =	\$184,070
Net Profit Before Tax =	\$79,670
VISITOR EXPENDITURES (Excluding Accommodation)	
• 2,947 Visitor Nights	
• 2.3 Visitors Per Party	
• 6,778 Visitors @ Daily Expenditure of \$32.00 =	\$216,896

The best locations for primitive accommodations are therefore on the lakes in the eastern portion of the study area. Many of these lakes already have primitive campgrounds that could be

expanded or improved. Figure 3 shows the potential areas where primitive accommodations could be best located. However, several areas indicating potential for moderate or deluxe accommodation would be suitable for primitive accommodations as well (especially Touchwood, Pinehurst, and Elinor Lakes). It is not desirable to develop primitive accommodations on Lac La Biche, or near the main highways.

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT
16 Unit Cabin Resort**

	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT (PERSON/ YEARS)
• Temporary Construction Impact	\$2,407,561	15
• Operations Impact (Annual)	\$171,425	2
• Indirect Visitor Spending Impact (Annual)	\$708,417	9
PROVINCIAL TAXATION REVENUE		
CORPORATE		
Temporary Construction	\$8,448	*
Operations (Annual)	\$1,785	*
PERSONAL		
Temporary Construction	\$41,220	*
Operations (Annual)	\$9,469	*

This analysis is based upon a hypothetical development offering 16 primitive cabins located on Helena Lake. The intent of this analysis is to indicate the approximate costs of development and operation, the potential for revenue recovery, the economic benefits to the region, and to describe other factors that must be considered.

(2) Moderate Range

This range includes developments that offer a comfortable "retreat" experience, typified by improved road access, pressurized water, electricity and recreational amenities such as boat launch, improved beach, and playgrounds. Typical examples of developments within this range include campgrounds, platform tents, cabins, and motor hotels.

Currently, most accommodations of this kind offered within the study area are at the low end of the moderate range (e.g. the campground at Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park, the campground at North Buck Lake, and the Diesel Owl Hoot Cabins). Young's Beach, located on Beaver Lake provides a good example of the middle of this range.

The development of moderate range accommodations such as a fully serviced campground or a motor hotel near a lakeshore site with beach, boating, and fishing, would diversify the existing accommodation supply. Similarly, the development of a well-serviced Recreation Vehicle campground in a similar location would be likely to appeal to both campers and fixed-roof users if it included a platform tent or serviced cabin component. A bed and breakfast opportunity at the Mission site would also be desirable.

The advantage of moderate range accommodation is that it provides enough services and infrastructure to potentially attract visitors for a longer recreational season. The upper end of the moderate range also has the potential to appeal to an extended market area. When accompanied by appropriate

commercial services, these developments can provide a reasonable economic stimulus to the area. The disadvantages include the fact that development costs are significantly higher than for primitive campgrounds, and that if the recreational season remains short, the potential for return on investment is weak.

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS AND COSTS (120 Unit Campground)

FINANCIAL ESTIMATES* 120 UNIT CAMPGROUND

EXPENSES	
Capital Investment =	\$507,000
TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT =	\$507,000
Operating Expenses	
Wages & Benefits =	\$50,000
Debt Services =	\$18,000
Lease Expenses =	\$20,000
Other (Utilities, Supplies, etc.) =	\$34,600
TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES =	\$122,600
REVENUE (Camping)	
8,670 @ \$15/night =	\$130,000
Other Revenue (Sales, Rentals) 30% of Revenue =	\$39,000
TOTAL REVENUE =	\$169,000
VISITATION	
May:	510
June:	1,360
July:	3,060
August:	2,380
September:	680
October:	680
TOTAL CAMPER NIGHTS =	8,670

* Adapted From: Alberta Department of Tourism, 1988.
Alberta's Private Campground Industry

REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT
120 Unit Campground

	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT (PERSON/ YEARS)
• Temporary Construction Impact	\$1,681,200	10
• Operations Impact (Annual)	\$402,618	4
• Indirect Visitor Spending Impact (Annual)	\$849,186	10
	PROVINCIAL TAXATION REVENUE	
CORPORATE		
Temporary Construction	\$5,888	•
Operations (Annual)	\$2,817	•
PERSONAL		
Temporary Construction	\$29,020	•
Operations (Annual)	\$14,754	•

• **Potential Locations**

The potential locations for moderate range accommodations are shown on Figure 3. These accommodations can be provided anywhere that deluxe accommodations can be, as well as at a few additional sites. A number of the current primitive sites within the study area could be upgraded to the moderate range, although this would not have immediate appeal to the traditional users of these sites. Moderate accommodations also have more appeal closer to service centres and the "beaten track".

The best sites for the development of moderate accommodations are on the south and eastern shores of Lac La Biche, as well as sites on Beaver, Elinor, Pinehurst, and Touchwood Lakes.

This analysis is based upon a hypothetical 120 unit campground, offering improved beach, boat launch, pressurized water, community showers, boat rentals, convenience store, daylodge, playground, and outdoor games area.

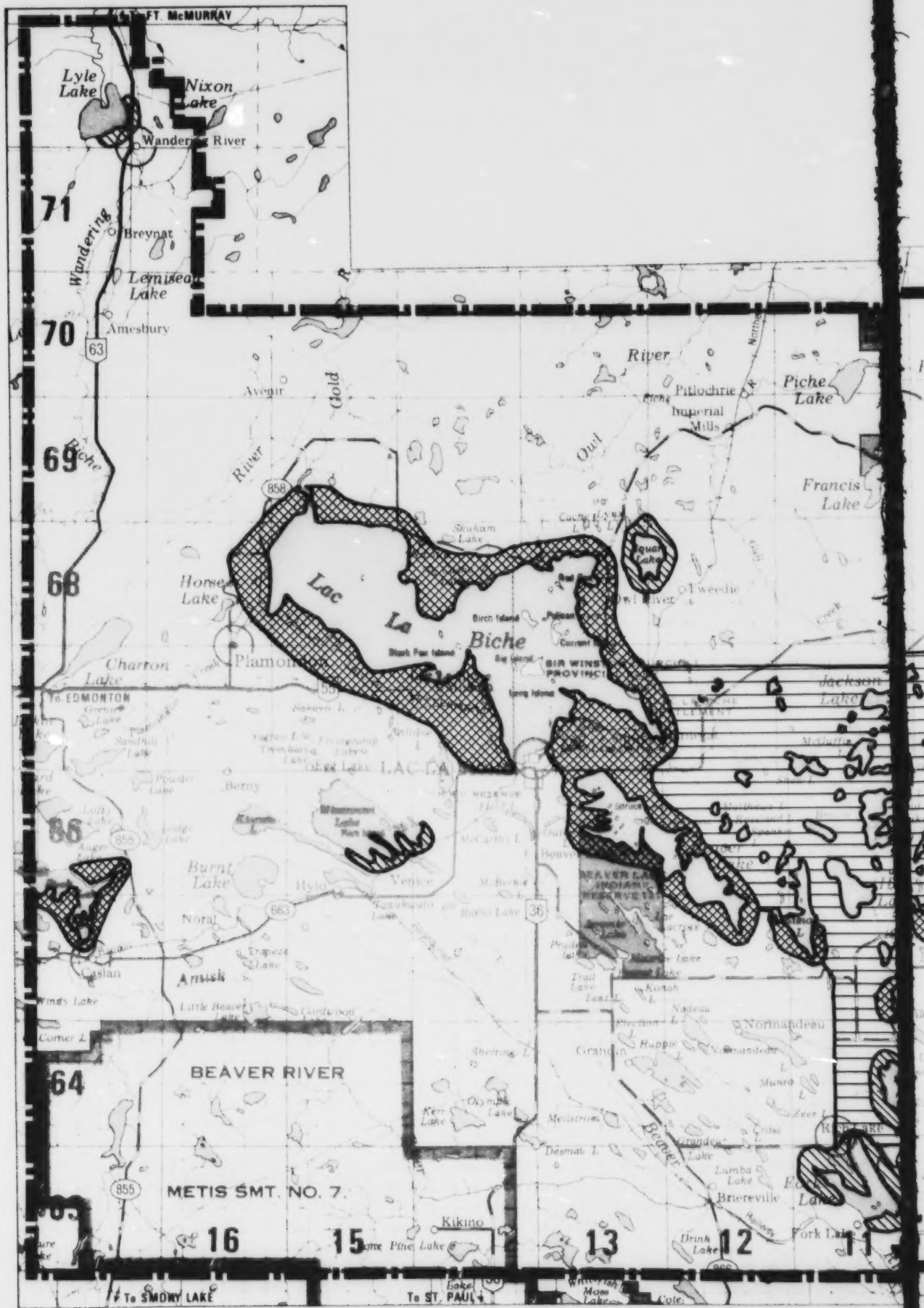
The intent of this analysis is to provide approximate costs and benefits, for the purposes of comparison.

(3) Deluxe Range

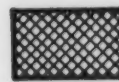
This range includes accommodation developments that offer essentially urban services, typified by full utilities, fireplaces, sidewalks, groomed grounds, restaurants and specialty shopping, and recreational amenities such as tennis courts, or recreational programs. This range includes primarily cabins and lodges in a resort development, although in Europe platform tents have also attracted a "niche" within this range.

This level of development appeals to a user group that has not traditionally looked to the study area for tourism opportunities. These are users that prefer convenience and comfort in their recreational experience, and are willing to pay for it.

The advantage of this kind of accommodation development is that it attracts significant expenditures to the area, which will have a beneficial economic impact; as well, this kind of accommodation can cater to more than one kind of use, and thereby establish an "off-season" clientele (e.g. meetings, skiers, nature retreats). This kind of development is significant, and currently has no competitors in Alberta outside of

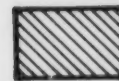


LEGEND



Deluxe Range

Potential for full service development



Moderate Range

Potential for moderate service development



Primitive Range

Potential for primitive service development



Site Boundary

Development limitations
are based upon the
Lakeland Integrated
Resource Plan.



LAKESIDE ACCOMMODATION DEVELOPMENT ZONES

LAKELAND TOURISM RESORT PLAN

NORTH

MAY 1990

FIGURE



SCALE



3

Kananaskis and the National Parks, and so would attract clients from an extended market area.

Currently, there are no examples of this kind of development on lakes in the study area. For the purposes of analysis, we have imagined a 32 room

**CASE STUDY ANALYSIS
OF BENEFITS AND COSTS
(32 Unit Deluxe Lodge)**

**FINANCIAL ESTIMATES
32 Unit Deluxe Lodge**

EXPENSES	
Capital Investment	
Buildings =	\$2,000,000
Furnishings (luxury) 40% of Capital =	\$800,000
TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT =	\$2,800,000
Operating Expenses*	
<i>Direct Expenses</i>	
Wages & Benefits =	\$85,000
Maintenance =	\$28,000
<i>Indirect Expenses</i>	
Fees & Promotion =	\$28,000
Depreciation and Other =	\$110,000
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES =	\$251,000

VISITOR SPENDING

• May to September (70% Occupancy) 22 Weeks = 3,450 nights @ \$90 =	\$310,500
• October to December (40% Occupancy) 13 Weeks = 1,165 Nights @ \$65 =	\$75,725
• January to February (40% Occupancy) 8 Weeks = 717 nights @ \$50 =	\$35,850
TOTAL REVENUE =	\$422,075

*Operating expenses are high due to low occupancy in off season. The expense estimate is 20 percent above average which should result in a conservative estimate of \$157,000 profit before taxes.

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT
32 Unit Deluxe Lodge**

	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT (PERSON/ YEARS)
• Temporary Construction Impact	\$7,399,200	45
• Operations Impact (Annual)	\$870,260	9
• Indirect Visitor Spending Impact (Annual)	\$1,306,113	16
	PROVINCIAL TAXATION REVENUE	
CORPORATE		
Temporary Construction	\$26,031	•
Operations (Annual)	\$5,194	•
PERSONAL		
Temporary Construction	\$125,280	•
Operations (Annual)	\$27,027	•

deluxe lodge offering access to a wide range of retreat amenities and adventure opportunities.

The primary disadvantage of this kind of development is that it is very expensive to develop, and must therefore have strong market potential if the return on investment is to be attractive. A major barrier to investment in this kind of development is the short "prime" season for use.

Potential Locations

Potential locations for this kind of development are shown on Figure 3. The best locations for the development of deluxe accommodations are near the town of Lac La Biche, taking advantage of excellent beach/water access, golfing, and historic sites in the area. It is conceivable that a deluxe lodge could also be developed further from Lac La

Biche as a basis for a high quality "adventure" experience (the best examples are exclusive guided hunting/fishing/canoeing experiences).

6.3 Adventure Opportunities

There are many opportunities to increase the range of adventure attractions in the study area, and thereby appeal to a wider range of potential vacationers. The forested lands and lakes in the area lend themselves to outdoor exploration and observation. This chapter describes a broad range of potential day use developments, within three categories: scenic touring, trails, and wildlife recreation.

Attractions of this sort broaden the appeal of the area to potential vacationers who plan to stay in accommodation and explore or engage in "adventure" activities. They will also attract visitors from a smaller market area for day activities.

6.3.1 Scenic Touring Opportunities

One of the important opportunities identified in the Community Tourism Action Plan for I.D. 18(S) was the potential to attract more touring vacation use to the area. It was felt that more vacation traffic could be attracted along Highway 55 as a "scenic route", and that scenic drive opportunities in the area could be identified.

• Requirements for Scenic Drive

There are several requirements for a successful scenic drive in the area. The chosen route must have consistently interesting and scenic views. It must also have some protection for the long

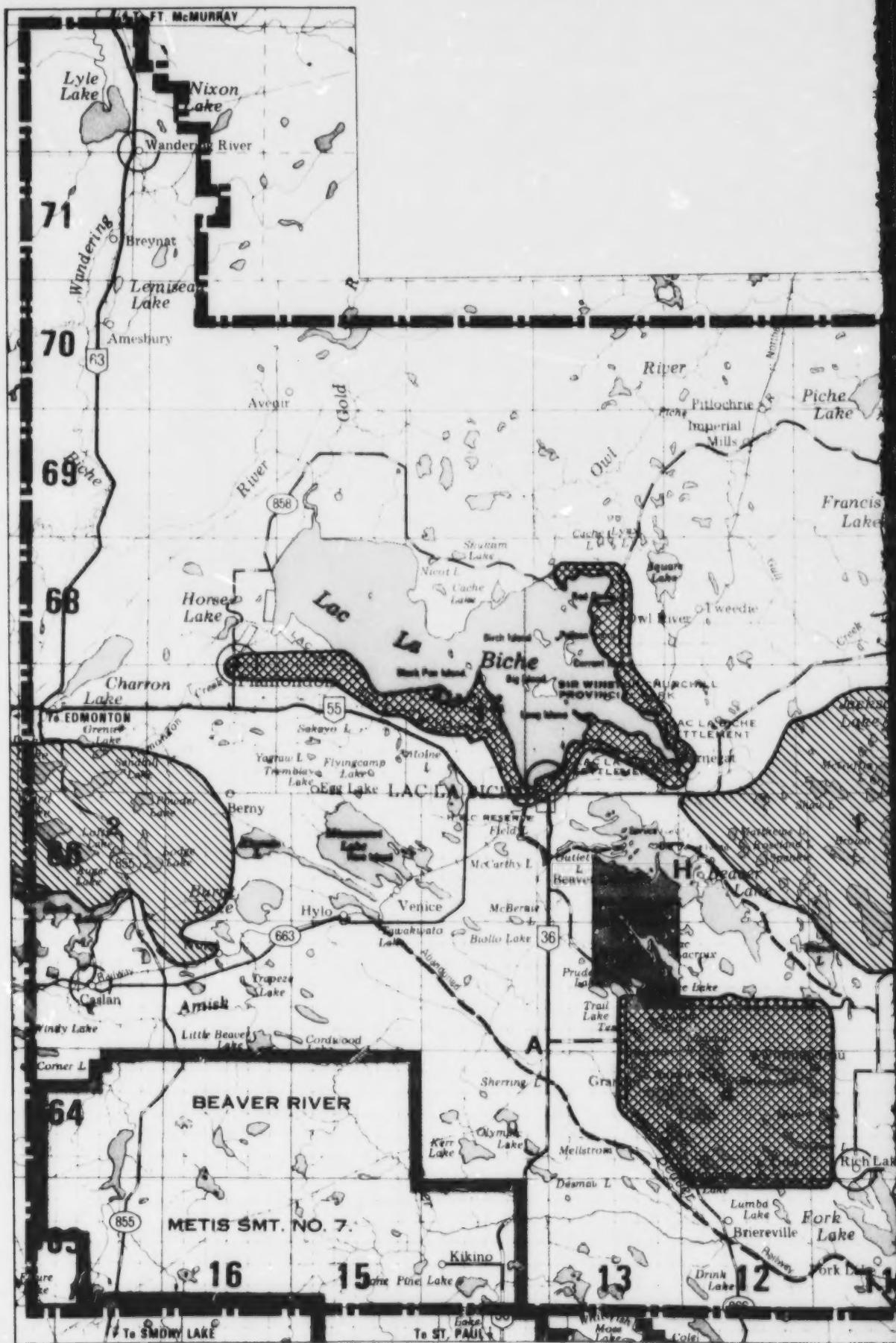
term to preserve its scenic nature. As well, the road surface must be paved, and pull-offs should be provided to promote casual stops and wildlife observation. It is very helpful if there are historic as well as natural features along the route, and if these are signed and explained to travellers along the route. Interpretation along the route can be provided by signs, brochures or audio tapes.

The payback from scenic drive development is often hard to calculate, since it is difficult to accurately measure how many travellers along these routes would have purchased gasoline, food or services without the scenic tour possibility. However, the scenic tour is an attractive feature on a tourism map, and will help to market the region to uninitiated users.

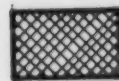
The areas with scenic drive potential are identified on Figure 4. The best scenic drive opportunities are the slightly rolling land around Normandeau (typified by lake views and shoreline wildlife opportunities), the route around the south and east shores of Lac La Biche (offering a variety of views of the lake and birdlife), and Highway 55 itself (which is an unusually scenic route across northern Alberta).

6.3.2 Trail Development Opportunities

There is significant potential in the study area to provide trail opportunities that lead through historic and visually interesting landscapes. The development of these trails would diversify the tourism product available, and would support an increase in destination use of the area.



LEGEND

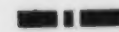


Scenic Routes



Trail and Wildlife Attractions

-cycling, hiking, skiing, horseback, snowmobile and wildlife viewing



Site Boundary

A

Abandoned Railway

-Potential Trail

H

Historic Trail Route

1

Jackson - Kinnaird Complex

2

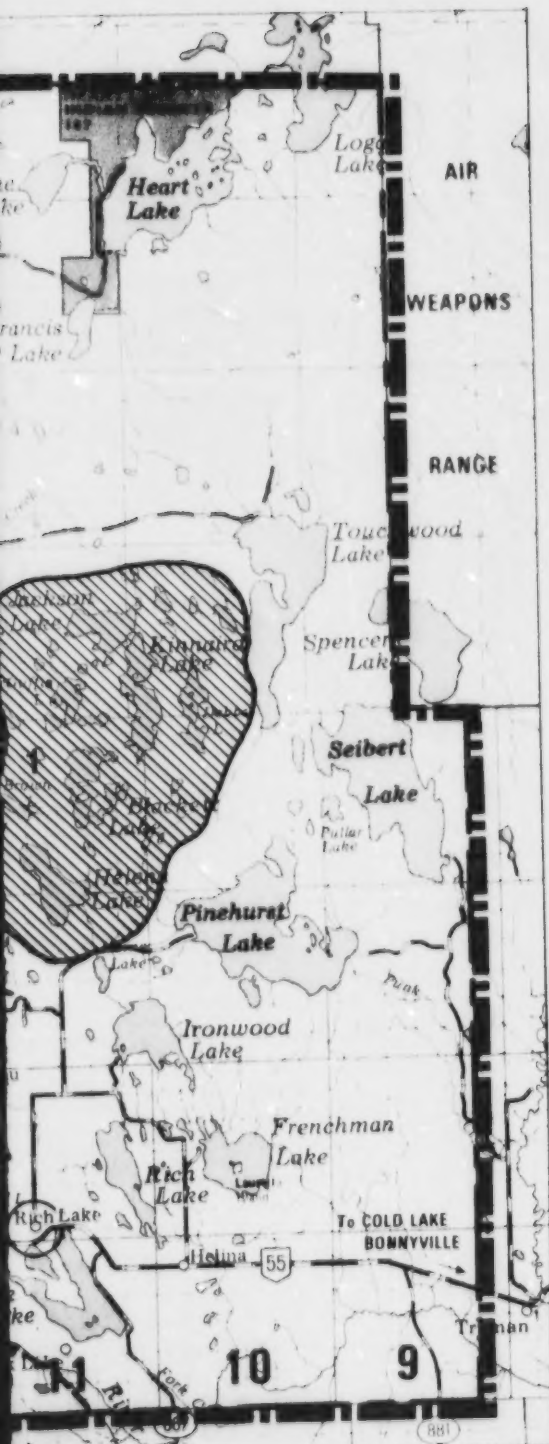
Caslan Sand Hills

3

South and Eastern Shores
Lac La Biche

4

Normandeau Area



POTENTIAL TOURING/ TRAIL/WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES

LAKELAND TOURISM RESORT PLAN

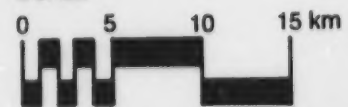
NORTH

MAY 1990

FIGURE



SCALE



4

Shaw Lake

The existing trail system at Shaw Lake already offers a reasonable trail opportunity to hikers and cross-country skiers. These trails could be enhanced through the development of an improved staging area, and through an extension of the trail system, and through some upgrading of the trail layout and; surfacing. The Shaw Lake trail area is already known to local users, is readily accessible to Lac La Biche, and offers an excellent base for further development.

Jackson-Kinnaird-Interlakes Area

The lake complex to the east of Lac La Biche offers the best terrain in the area for year-round trails. The landscape has enough roll to make trail use interesting, and the complex of lakes provides scenic breaks, wildlife viewing opportunities, and site opportunities (picnicking, fishing, viewing). In this area, the user gets the sense of "going somewhere", rather than just wandering in the bush.

A series of trail systems could be developed in this area to cater to bicyclists, skiers, and hikers. Given the success of the Kananaskis Country trails, and current North American trends, it is recommended that a significant scenic "core" trail be created to cater to bicyclists in summer and skiers in winter. Branching off this trail, there should be more challenging hiking and skiing opportunities. Equestrian and ATV trails should be developed as separate networks.

There is also potential to create a canoe "trail" through the development of

FINANCIAL ESTIMATES

Jackson-Kinnaird Trail/Canoe Routes

EXPENSES

Capital Investment

5 Kilometres of Trail (Paved Surface)

@ \$200,000 per Kilometre = \$1,000,000

25 Kilometres of Trails (Non-Paved)

@ \$75,000 per Kilometre = \$1,875,000

Signage and Site Treatment = \$525,000

TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT = \$3,400,000

Operating Expenses

(Assumes periodic site
maintenance with
no full-time staff) =

\$100,000

VISITOR EXPENDITURES

• 41,000 Visitor Days

70 Percent Day Use (Estimate at Camper Rate)

28,700 @ \$15 = \$430,500

30 Percent Overnight (At Cabin Rate)

12,300 @ \$55 = \$676,500

TOTAL VISITOR EXPENDITURES= \$1,107,000

REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

Jackson-Kinnaird Trail/Canoe Routes

	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT (PERSON/ YEARS)
• Temporary Construction Impact	\$10,036,975	62
• Operations Impact (Annual)	\$328,400	3
• Indirect Visitor Spending Impact (Annual)	\$3,504,983	43
	PROVINCIAL TAXATION REVENUE	
CORPORATE		
Temporary Construction	\$35,229	*
Operations (Annual)	\$7,236	*
PERSONAL		
Temporary Construction	\$171,652	*
Operations (Annual)	\$33,915	*

portages between the lakes. The creation of a portage opportunity would be reminiscent of the fur trade activities that initially led to the settlement of this area. The development of a canoe-portage circle here would be unique in Alberta, and would attract use from outside the province. This would also establish a strong guiding opportunity (as exists at Bowron Lake Provincial Park in British Columbia). The canoe route should be complemented by remote primitive campsites and/or cabins for travellers.

Caslan Sandhills

The Caslan Sandhills also offer a rolling topography that is appealing to trail users. However, this area is (naturally) sandy, and supports a more open jackpine forest. This area offers potential for development of equestrian trails, and for ATV trails. Although the terrain is dry, the area offers intermittent views of small lakes scattered throughout the complex.

As with the Jackson-Kinnaird area, the trails in this area should be developed to cater to specific kinds of users. The development of equestrian trails in the area should be undertaken with specific intent to serve equestrian users, and should not be compromised for other uses, unless that is acceptable to all users. Many parts of the landscape are sensitive to overuse, and will become eroded if poorly developed. A detailed analysis of ground and snow conditions should be undertaken before trails are developed. Similarly, the needs of equestrian and ATV users should be researched. However, the area appears to offer an excellent opportunity for trail

development. This trail area could be connected to Plamondon, as well.

There is also significant opportunity to create a long distance snowmobile trail system in the study area. Regional snowmobile clubs have proposed a major trail from St. Paul, through the Lakeland area. The trail would ultimately connect St. Paul, Lac La Biche, Conklin, and Fort McMurray. There may also be an opportunity to bring this trail north of Lac La Biche to connect to Plamondon.

6.3.3 Fish and Wildlife Tourism Opportunities

Sport Fishing

Currently, sport fishing is a major tourism activity in the area, that attracts more than 30,000 angler trips per year. The future of tourism in the Lakeland study area is heavily dependent upon this opportunity. It is therefore important that the fishing stocks be carefully monitored and managed, and that efforts are made to ensure the longterm health of the fishery.

If access to lakes in the area is improved, then angler hours will increase. However, there is a balance between supply and demand that must be achieved. The Integrated Resource Plan for the Lakeland area (1985) indicated that there was significant capacity for expansion of sport fishing in the area. Currently, biologists are concerned that some species (eg. walleye) are under significant pressure, and are proposing that fish takes and populations be carefully planned and monitored.

Hunting

While hunting opportunities in the area attract significantly fewer visitors than do fishing opportunities, they are

FINANCIAL ESTIMATES **Hunting**

Incremental Visitor Days =	7,900
• 50 Percent Day Use @ \$12 3,950 @ \$12 =	\$45,000
• 50 Percent Extended Use @ \$29 3,950 @ \$29 =	\$114,550
TOTAL VISITOR =	\$162,000

HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES

• Indirect Expenditures =	\$590,000
• Employment (Person-Years) =	7
• Provincial Income Tax =	\$15,000

nevertheless a significant contributor to tourism in the area. In 1985, the Integrated Resource Plan included an estimate that almost 8,000 recreation days would be generated annually by the attraction of hunting.

The majority of hunting in the area is for big game: moose, white tailed deer, mule deer, and black bear. The Integrated Resource Plan for the area did not recommend any specific expansion of hunting in the area.

Role of Guides and Outfitters

The potential for expanded guiding activity in the area will be highly dependent upon the management of fish and

wildlife resources and habitat. Currently, it would appear that there will be opportunities for guides and outfitters to expand their roles in the tourism industry through (a) more emphasis on recreational "adventures" like canoeing, photography, wilderness camping, and birdwatching, and (b) a selective increase in guided hunting and fishing activities where management plans allow this.

It would be beneficial if well-experienced outfitters took an interest in providing high quality backcountry adventures in the area. It is foreseeable that a well packaged adventure opportunity, with accommodations, gear and guides provided, would potentially draw interest from outside the province.

The potential for lodge and guide/outfitter operation on Seibert Lake should be carefully considered, since this is likely the most attractive opportunity in the area for international visitors. If an operator had a capital investment in a lodge facility on the lake, it seems reasonable that (a) that lodge would become a control point to monitor fish removal, and (b) the operator would be highly motivated to manage the resource for the long term.

In general, strategies should be found to induce tourists to pay for the removal of significant fish and wildlife resources. These resources are invaluable to the region, and are currently "given away" with little economic recovery.

6.4 Potential Heritage Tourism Developments

There is a wealth of potential heritage resources in the Lac La Biche area

that can possibly play a role in the development of the tourism industry in that area. The resources include pre-historic artifacts, fur trade sites, routes, and artifacts, and early settlement sites and records.

The history of the Lac La Biche area may be particularly interesting to Canadian and European tourists because the expansion of the fur trade through this area in the late 18th century has occupied a prominent place in school books and historical novels. The names of those who passed this way are legendary to many: Peter Pond, David Thompson, Peter Fidler, Angus Shaw, and George Simpson. The Beaver River is the prototypical wilderness exploration route, and many are familiar with its name, though they may not know its location.

There is also very good potential to integrate heritage tourism developments with recreation-oriented developments in this area, since the historic routes and sites are primarily within prime recreational locations.

6.4.1 Heritage Resources in the Area

• Prehistoric Resources

There are more than 50 prehistoric sites identified within the Lac La Biche area, and they indicate a rich and interesting story. An analysis of pottery and projectile point forms indicated that the area was likely occupied by man immediately following the wasting of the Laurentide Ice sheet around 9500 B.C., and has been continuously occupied since that time. The lakes of the area were apparently rich enough to sustain

large villages in the area throughout the year. The ecology of the area changed between 5500 B.C. and 1500 B.C. as the boreal forest boundary shifted northwards and the area became more like the plains-parkland areas now located south of the study area.

While much work remains to be done, there is certainly potential to develop displays in the area that describe the nature of the long prehistoric period.

• Fur Trade Period

The Lakeland area includes the Lac La Biche trail (Beaver River) which was one of the most important routes used during the expansion of the fur trade (and therefore European culture) into the area that is now Alberta. Euro-Canadian traders began to document their travels into this area in the latter part of the eighteenth century, because a rivalry had developed between the Hudson's Bay Company and the newer Northwest Company for primacy in the rich fur areas of northern Alberta. Each company had an interest in documenting explorations into the area, and in opening shelters and trading posts.

In 1789, Angus Shaw (Northwest Co.) travelled at least a portion of the Beaver River and built a shelter on Moose Lake. From here, it is highly likely that others began to penetrate the trading area to the northwest. In 1798, David Thompson (Northwest Co.) travelled past this site and established an outpost on Lac La Biche (Red Deer's House I). Then in 1799, Peter Fidler (HBC) travelled to Lac La Biche and also established an outpost (Greenwich House).

Lac La Biche was an important juncture for the traders, since it connected to the Arctic drainage system, and allowed the traders to travel northwards to the Athabasca River, Lesser Slave Lake, and the Peace River. It also provided the most heavily travelled route to the Columbia drainage, west of the Rocky Mountains. The Beaver River was heavily travelled for this purpose for at least 25 years. The river was often intolerably low, and portions of this route were improved by the development of sections of trail during this period. George Simpson, the governor of the Hudson's Bay Company documented his travel on this trail in 1824. His records show that he made the trip from Isle La Crosse in Saskatchewan to Lac La Biche in a remarkable 15 days.

The period of the rivalry between the two fur trade companies is one of the most famous periods in Canadian history, and Lac La Biche is an important site that was central to this story. The reputation of this period will serve the study area well, as a springboard to creating broader national and international awareness of the area. Unfortunately, there are no buildings left from this period. There are, however, portions of the Lac La Biche trail that are much like they were during the fur trade period.

As the rivalry for furs continued, the oligopoly on fur supply began to break down and the first period of entrepreneurialism erupted in Western Canada. In the early 19th century, the free traders moved into the Lac La Biche area and began to compete with the fur trade giants. The free traders established their own posts, and were highly efficient competitors. This was likely a colourful

period, but little has been recorded and none of the free trade posts remain.

• **Settlement Period**

As the fur trade progressed, there began to be a public interest in opening the territories to missions. The Oblate Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church began to visit the Lac La Biche area in the 1840s, and a mission was constructed there in 1853. The mission was called Notre Dame des Victoires, and was to become an important hub of transportation and communication by the latter part of the 19th Century.

By 1877, the Mission had grown considerably to include a residence (which still stands as a convent), a church, a barn, and several outbuildings along with agricultural fields. Several other buildings were constructed in the 1920s, and these compose the majority of the existing buildings on site.

The Mission brought agriculture and residential living to the area, and it was in response to the presence of the Mission that the settlements in the area began to evolve.

6.4.2 The Lac La Biche Mission

The Mission has already received designation as a Provincial Historic Site and as a National Historic Site. A feasibility plan has been completed and restoration of the site is already underway. The Lac La Biche Mission represents an important part of the settlement beginnings of northern Alberta, and also is located in an attractive recreational setting. It therefore provides significant opportunity to attract visitors to the area.

• Proposed Development

Two significantly different options are available for the reconstruction of the Mission. A feasibility study has been completed that describes the restoration of the Mission to its 1920s appearance. This option takes advantage of several 1920s buildings that are still standing. The storyline would describe the operation of a boarding school and mission site, and the development of a community in the area.

The alternative development would be a reconstruction of the Mission to its appearance in 1877 to 1889. This reconstruction would be more expensive, but would recreate a dramatic period in history, after the fur trade, when the missionaries were establishing a basis for an agrarian community, and were operating a major transportation supply post serving a large regional area.

The proposed heritage tourism development would include not only the Mission buildings (church, residence, barn, outbuildings), but would also include additional services that would appeal to tourists.

From a tourism perspective (rather than a historical perspective) it is our opinion that the interpretive story of the site during the 1870s will have broader appeal than will the 1920s storyline. Recognizing that complete restoration of the site to the 1870s would be prohibitively expensive, we are proposing that the site should place significant emphasis upon the late 19th century storyline, as well as the more modern 1920 storyline. This would eliminate the possibility of a "living history" site, but would allow the presentation of each period

through displays, costumed interpreters, and audio-visual (especially audio) support. The proposed site program includes:

• PHASE I •

The restoration of the convent and development of a kiosk/entryway to acclimatize visitors. The improvement of beach access, recreation of the historic lakeside trails, and provision of picnic, recreation, and beach areas at lakeside.

• PHASE II •

Interpretive renovation of the church and the rectory. Provision of interpretive displays and a gift shop.

• PHASE III •

The provision of a bed and breakfast facility and public restaurant in the 1920s rectory. The reconstruction of historic outbuildings, and the completion of a formal entryway, and landscaping.

This model is purely conceptual, and was created for the sole purpose of allowing investigation. It does not reflect commitments by the local historical society, or any level of government at this time.

The cost of producing such an attraction could be prohibitive, unless some license is taken with historic authenticity. However, the story of this centre would be preserved, and the tourism attraction would be maximized.

• Observations

The historic significance of the site makes it a strong candidate for redevelop-

opment. While, its merits as a tourism attraction are only moderate, the site is a strong candidate for restoration and related historical development. The attractiveness of the site is definitely supported by the development of the lakeshore area and nearby field for recreation opportunities.

The development of the Mission as a heritage tourism attraction would definitely extend the markets for the Lakeland area, by attracting new market segments, by encouraging longer stays, and by extending the tourism season (somewhat). However, there is some reason to believe that these markets will not be attracted in large numbers because there is a shortage of complementary heritage and/or cultural opportunities in the area, and because there is a shortage of fixed-roof accommodation, restaurants, and retail facilities that appeal to the potential users. The Mission will be attractive primarily to markets who are:

- (a) touring the area;
- (b) are on a day trip;
- (c) are staying in the area in fixed-roof accommodation; or
- (d) are part of a group tour.

Focus groups undertaken earlier (for a similar study of Fort Dunvegan) indicated that people over 55 years of age would be attracted to travel further to a site such as this. We expect enroute visitors on their way down the Fort McMurray highway (Highway 63), or across Highway 36 to be attracted.

The least response (on a percentage basis) will come from the campers who enter the area each summer primarily for the purpose of fishing and lakeside recreation.

The attractiveness of the Mission will be greatly enhanced if another heritage or cultural attraction is developed within the study area, that appeals to similar markets. There will also be a sympathetic relationship to the town of Lac La Biche (i.e. visitation at the Mission will be bolstered if services in the town are upgraded, and increased visitation at the Mission will create a potential demand for upgraded tourism services).

The Mission would benefit most if it can be tied to the fur trade theme, which is the most powerful theme in the region.

• Opportunity for Related Community/ Private Sector Services

The Mission development would provide a basis for the development of several private additional retail opportunities and services. On-site, the operation of a bed and breakfast, a restaurant and a gift shop would create jobs and retail opportunities.

In town, the visitation to the centre would increase demand for fixed-roof accommodation, restaurants, and retail goods. While it is unlikely that any businesses will be able to exist on the basis of the Mission market alone, it is anticipated that many businesses in Lac La Biche will increase their sales as a result of its presence. (See Financial Estimate and Economic Impact tables on following page.)

FINANCIAL ESTIMATES **Lac La Biche Mission**

EXPENSES

Capital Investment (Over All Phases)	
Convent Restoration =	\$3,000,000
Church Restoration =	\$500,000
Rectory Restoration =	\$2,000,000
Artifacts =	\$500,000

TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT = \$6,000,000

Operating Expenses	
10 Percent of Capital =	\$600,000

TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES = \$600,000

VISITOR EXPENDITURES

• 45,000 Visitors	
50% Overnight: 22,500 @ \$90 =	\$2,025,000
50% Day Use: 22,500 @ \$27.50 =	\$618,750
*Gate: 45,000 @ Average \$3.50 =	\$157,500

*Gate is estimated at \$5.00 per adult. With different price levels for segments such as children and seniors, the entrance revenue is estimated at \$3.50 per person.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT **Lac La Biche Mission**

	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT*	EMPLOYMENT (PERSON YEARS)
• Temporary Construction Impact	\$19,362,500	115
• Operations Impact (Annual)	\$1,970,400	20
• Indirect Visitor Spending Impact (Annual)	\$6,650,596	60

CORPORATE

Temporary Construction	\$65,498	•
Operations (Annual)	\$18,000	•

PERSONAL

Temporary Construction	\$392,320	•
Operations (Annual)	\$95,125	•

* Economic Impact at Conclusion of Phase II.

6.4.3 Portage La Biche/Fur Trade Interpretation Area

Description of Proposed Development

The proposed development is in a highly conceptual stage. The description within this study has been created purely to allow investigation of the proposed idea. It does not reflect current commitments by either the town or the provincial governments.

The Portage La Biche was an important portage on the Beaver River route to Lac La Biche. It was in use for at least 40 years, and was heavily used more than half of that time. It offered a crossing from the Hudson's Bay drainage (Rupert's Land) to the Arctic and Columbian drainages (Athabasca Country). It was first documented by David Thompson in 1798, and used by fur traders well into the 19th Century.

The portage represents the drama and struggle of the lives of the fur traders, and portages were as important as mountain passes in determining the routes the traders followed. This particular one has a colourful and famous history that should appeal to all Canadians and many Europeans, and should be marketable to American audiences. Portage La Biche includes three components:

- (a) the Short Portage, from the Beaver River to Field Lake;
- (b) Field Lake itself; and
- (c) the Long Portage through a wetland to Lac La Biche.

While there are significant barriers to overcome to ensure that lands along the trail route can be opened to public access, the following components should be considered as part of this attraction:

- (a) an entry gate at Lac La Biche, where the visitor can see the vista that greeted the traders, and where displays on the fur trade posts at the lake are featured (retail kiosk available);
- (b) a boardwalk across the wetland, from which visitors can see explanatory interpretive signs;
- (c) a self-guided trail along which interpretation through brochure and audio tape is offered;
- (d) a lakeside display at Field Lake showing the traders loading their canoes for the portage;
- (e) canoe rentals at Field Lake; and
- (f) a self-guided trail down to the edge of Beaver River, where a display pays further tribute to the fur traders.

The Lac La Biche end of the development should ideally be linked with other town attractions via a shore-front walk.

*** Observations**

The portage would have symbolic importance to the creation of new tourism markets in the study area. The fur trade theme is highly recognized by the markets and should be integrated

into tourism developments. The portage and fur trade interpretation area would be a "flagship" that would anchor this theme, and create a marketable image.

The fur trade interpretation could be undertaken in many forms, but we have recommended that an indoor-outdoor environment be employed here. The use of a single building, which is the norm, may not have the romantic appeal, or the market attraction necessary to differentiate itself from other similar attractions in Alberta.

FINANCIAL ESTIMATES **Portage La Biche**

EXPENSES

Capital Investment

Building:	
5,000 Sq. Ft. @ \$100 per Sq. Ft. =	\$500,000
Displays:	
2,000 Sq. Ft. @ \$300 per Sq. Ft. =	\$600,000
Boardwalk =	\$300,000
Signs and Outdoor Development =	\$400,000
Site Preparation =	\$200,000

TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT = \$2,000,000

Operating Expenses (Annual)

10 Percent of Capital Investment = \$200,000

VISITOR EXPENDITURES

*** 81,000 Visitors**

50% Overnight: 40,500 @ \$90 =	\$3,645,000
50% Day Use: 40,500 @ \$27.50 =	\$1,113,750

*Gate: 45,000 @ \$1 Donation = \$81,000

*** Opportunities for Related Community/ Private Sector Services**

The location of the fur trade area near the town of Lac La Biche will maximize the opportunity for a direct connection to services in the community.

On-site, there will be an opportunity for a retail kiosk (food and souvenirs), and canoe rentals. Off-site, there will be a flow of visitors into town businesses. Demand will likely be highest for accommodation, restaurants, and retail services like film, local arts and crafts, and fast foods.

<u>REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT</u> <u>Portage La Biche</u>		
	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT (PERSON/ YEARS)
• Temporary Construction Impact	\$5,217,800	62
• Operations Impact (Annual)	\$656,800	9
• Indirect Visitor Spending* Impact (Annual)	\$15,179,200	182
	PROVINCIAL TAXATION REVENUE	
CORPORATE		
Temporary Construction	\$18,362	*
Operations (Annual)	\$27,903	*
PERSONAL		
Temporary Construction	\$88,236	*
Operations (Annual)	\$150,814	*

**Indirect spending is high because other than the donation at the gate, all impacts occur in other facilities (food, accommodation, gas, etc.).*

6.4.4 Lac La Biche Trail (Beaver River Route)

The Beaver river is one of the most famous and significant fur trade routes in Canada. It has the potential to be recognized by name in Eastern Canada and England, and possibly in other distant locations.

The Beaver River is no longer attractive as a canoe route, but it is visible in many locations within the study area (three on Highway 36 alone). The use of historic theme signs at these locations, and the development of interpretive pull-outs adjacent to the Beaver River would help reinforce the significance of the fur trade in this area and would help anchor the fur trade theme.

6.4.5 Fur Trade Outposts

Several important fur trade outposts were created in the Lac La Biche area. These include Red Deer's House (1798), Greenwich House (1799), the Joseph Ladouceur Trading Post (mid-1800s), and the newer Hudson's Bay post in the community of Lac La Biche. It would be attractive to tourists to mark these sites prominently and to indicate their presence on a regional map. All of the historic sites in the area should be connected into a single historic theme and image. On-site interpretation would strengthen the presence of this theme. It may be possible to get the Hudson's Bay Company to participate in this exercise.

6.5 Lac La Biche South and Eastern Shores

The centre of the tourism attraction in the Lakeland area is the south and eastern shoreline of Lac La Biche (see Figure 6). This area combines scenery, services, cultural opportunities, and living resources in a way that is highly attractive to tourists. The tourism attraction is anchored by Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park on the eastern shore, the town of Lac La Biche in the middle, and the Mission site on the

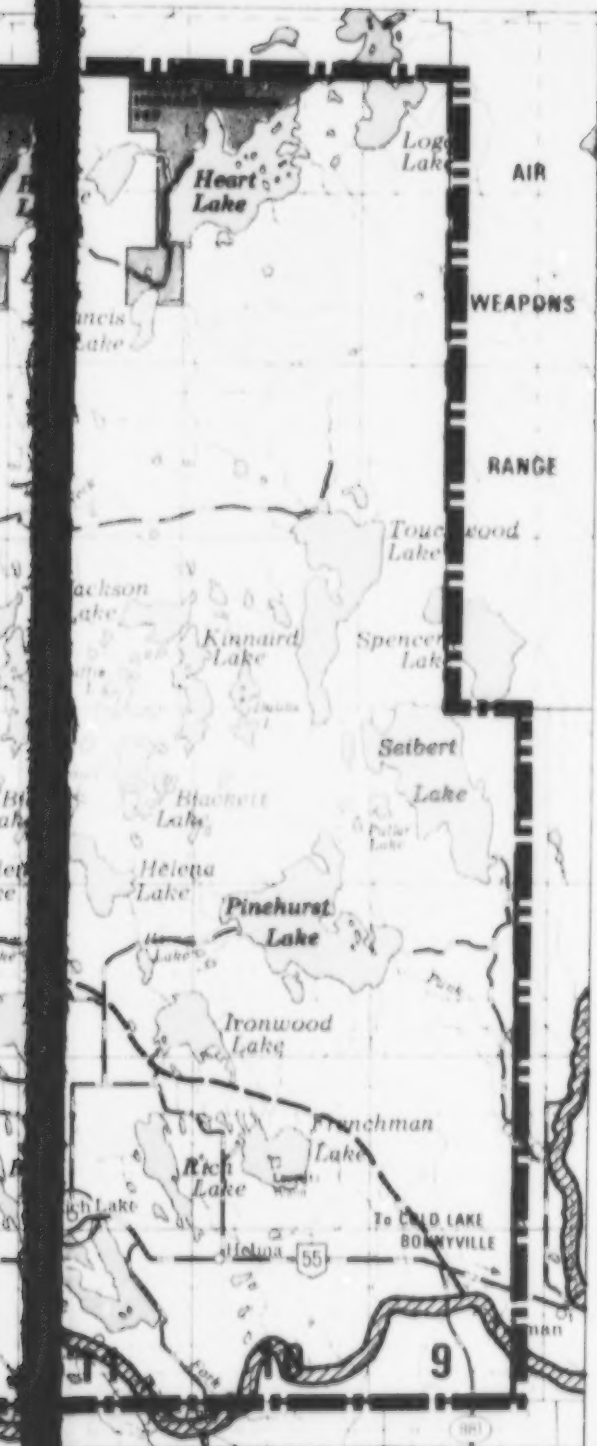


LEGEND

- M Mission
- P Portage
- B Beaver River
- G Greenwich House
- H Hudson's Bay Post
- R Red Deers Lake House I

--- Historic Cart Trail

■ Site Boundary



POTENTIAL HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS LAKELAND TOURISM RESORT PLAN

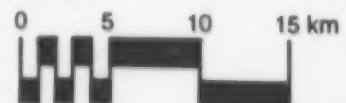
NORTH

MAY 1990

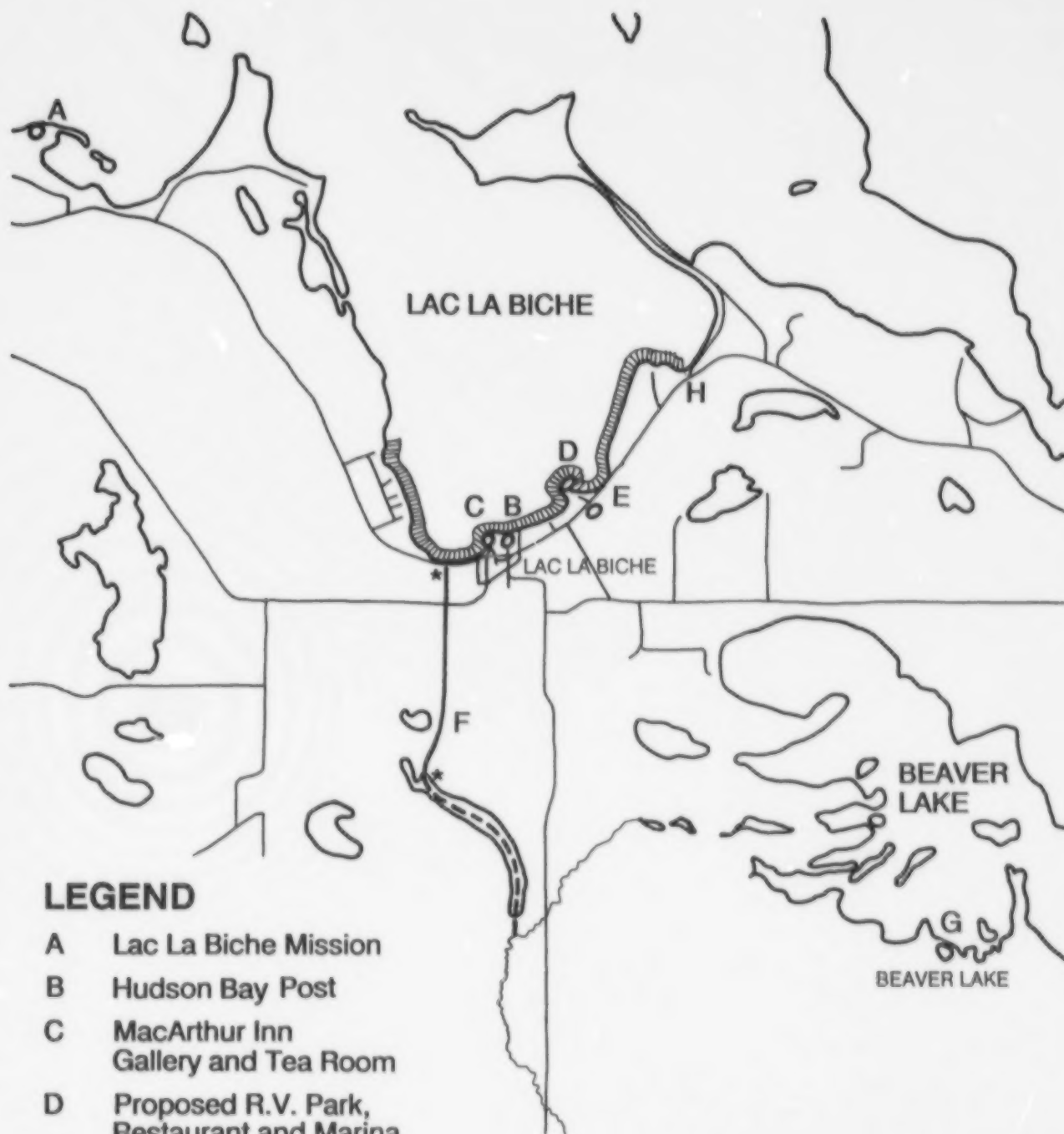
FIGURE



SCALE



5



LEGEND

- A Lac La Biche Mission
- B Hudson Bay Post
- C MacArthur Inn
Gallery and Tea Room
- D Proposed R.V. Park,
Restaurant and Marina
- E Proposed Bingo and
Recreation Centre
- F Portage La Biche
- G Proposed Deluxe Hotel
- H Golf Course and
Proposed Accommodation
- * Interpretive Display Areas
-  Lac La Biche Waterfront

CORE AREA TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES LAKE TOURISM RESORT PLAN

NORTH

MAY 1990
SCALE

FIGURE



6



southern shore. There is significant potential to connect these sites with scenic drives and trails.

The marketability of this area should not be underestimated. However, tourism developers should also realize that this area has some significant constraints which include a perception of Lac La Biche as a "rough" place, the rapidly diminishing public access to the shoreline, and increasing signals that water quality is becoming unacceptable. If the area can overcome these barriers, it will have a marketable tourism entity.

The most significant strength of the area is the concentration of attractions and services. However, the town of Lac La Biche plays a pivotal role in this attraction, and must be prepared to make tourism a priority in order to make the attraction work.

Lac La Biche Waterfront

A key element of the attraction would be a scenic, accessible, and upgraded waterfront through the town. Some redevelopment is already underway; the new civic centre and park (McArthur Place) will create a highly attractive lakeside facility that will "anchor" the waterfront experience. This development could be augmented by:

- (a) a wharf area, including a food and souvenir outlet;
- (b) a tea room and gallery/museum in the civic centre;
- (c) a designated heritage trail along the waterfront;

(d) support of themed facades for homes or buildings along the waterfront;

(e) a market area for regional foods, ethnic wares, and crafts;

(f) the interpretive area for the Portage La Biche interpretive displays; and

(g) a display related to the Hudson's Bay post.

Scenic Drives

The drive from the town northeast to Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park is already highly popular. An effort should be made to specifically upgrade this road north to Owl River, emphasizing the scenic view opportunities. Similarly, the drive along the southern shore to the Mission and further to Plamondon can be re-aligned to create scenic views and pull-offs.

Recreation Opportunities

The redevelopment of the scenic golf course to include 18 holes is the beginning of an expansion of recreation opportunities in the area. In addition, there is a proposal to develop a recreation centre north of the town, that would include bowling, bingo, billiards, fast foods, and social event facilities.

As well, the Alberta Vocational Centre is constructing a swimming pool that could be highly attractive to tourists. The development of cycling trails and ski trails between the town and Sir Winston Churchill Park would further complement these opportunities.

• Accommodation

There are two proposals to develop recreation vehicle areas on the eastern shore of Lac La Biche. As well, the golf course society has explored the potential to develop a cottage area on the lake-shore. If the golf course could develop a deluxe fixed-roof facility - offering access to golfing, the lake, beaches, fishing, and cycling and skiing trails - this would be a very strong attraction within the area. This may be the best location in the study area for a development of this sort.

Another deluxe fixed-roof development has been proposed on the Beaver Lake Indian Reserve. This would also provide a strong potential location for this level of facility, which is badly needed in the area. The Beaver Lake site should be connected to trail opportunities, and should have access to the Portage La Biche route. Access to other recreational opportunities will strengthen the Beaver Lake site.

6.6 Generator Analysis: Proposed Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area

During the course of this study, the Alberta Government announced its intention to build a new Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area in the study area. *This chapter describes a preliminary program for that proposal, although the Government is committed to local public consultation on this development, and recognizes that the program could change substantially.* The proposed developments included in this chapter are therefore described as program intentions, rather than development commitments.

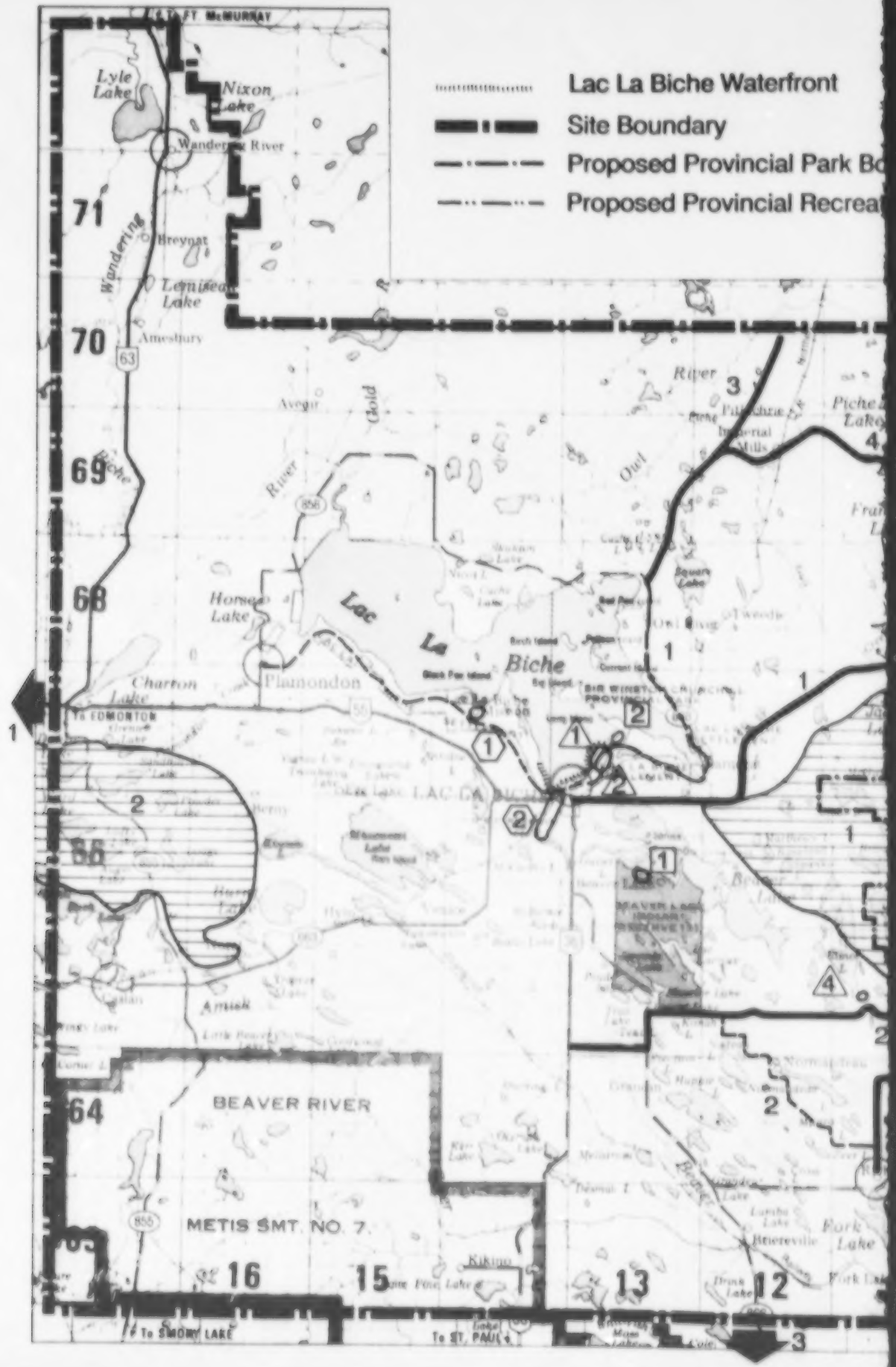
Based upon the program currently being considered, we have attempted to analyze the economic impact of the proposed development and the potential to integrate it with private sector proposals.

• The Proposed Lakeland Park and Recreation Area

The proposed area of the Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area would be approximately 227 square miles (58,856 hectares). This would include a 56 square mile park and a 171 square mile recreation area, as shown in Figure 7. The intention would be to attract tourists from Northern Alberta, Edmonton, and out of province by offering improved access and accommodations on several lakes offering high quality recreational lakes and lakeshores.

The improvements proposed as part of Lakeland park are described in detail in Table 4. All of these improvements are proposals only at this time. The government will seek public input before finalizing its plans.

In addition to these improvements, the Department of Recreation and Parks has indicated that it wishes to offer private sector development and operation opportunities, particularly at Pinehurst Lake, where the potential for a private sector developer to establish a four-season resort is being considered. The department would also explore private sector operation of campgrounds, and tour guiding services throughout the proposed tourism development.



nt

ark Boundary

recreational Area Boundary



LEGEND

--- Scenic Drives

- 1 South and Eastern Shores
Lac La Biche
- 2 Normandeau Area



Heritage Tourism Sites

- 1 Lac La Biche Mission
- 2 Portage La Biche



Deluxe Accommodation

- 1 Beaver Lake -Lodge, Cabin Development and Campground
- 2 Possible Cabins/Lodge



Moderate Accommodation

- 1 Proposed Destination Resort
-Food, camping, and recreational amenities
- 2 Recreational Complex
-Bingo, Bowling, RV Parking and Fast Food
- 3 Proposed Campground
-170 site (Fully serviced)
- 4 Golfcourse/Campground



Primitive Accommodation

- 1 Primitive Cabin Development
- 2 Campground, Heart Lake
- 3 Proposed Campground
-100 unit, primitive
- 4 Upgrade Primitive Campground
-35 sites
- 5 Campground



Adjacent Developments

- 1 Blackstar Resort
- 2 Cold Lake Marina
- 3 Cabin/Trail Development, Whitefish Lake



Proposed Trail Networks

- 1 Jackson - Kinnaird Complex
- 2 Caslan Sand Hills



Upgraded Access

- 1 Touchwood Lake
- 2 Pinehurst Lake
- 3 Conklin Road
- 4 Heart Lake

PROPOSED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT LAKELAND TOURISM RESORT PLAN

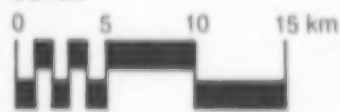
NORTH

MAY 1990

FIGURE



SCALE



7

TABLE 4: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

1. PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA

Pinehurst Lake

- A serviced campground of 170 sites (110 new sites, 60 upgraded sites) with flush toilets, shower facilities, and power hook-ups;
- A new group use area of 20 units;
- An upgraded beach and day use area with associated parking;
- Upgraded boat launching facilities including the provision of 30 boat launch parking stalls, removable or floating docks, and boat hitching posts;
- Boat-in/hike-in primitive campsites scattered around the lake including some with a basic camp kitchen;
- Interpretive trails;
- A major interpretive/information services facility (i.e. amphitheatre);
- Upgrading of road access (Alberta Transportation and Utilities);
- Provision of water, power, and sewage disposal services (Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services);
- Seasonal staff accommodation and storage facilities; and
- Playground equipment.
- A four season resort with fixed-roof accommodation (eg. lodges, cabins, recreational vehicle trailer park);
- Boat mooring including boat rentals and supplies; and
- A food concession.

Touchwood Lake

- A 100 unit campground through minor upgrading of the existing camp facilities and provision of new sites along the lakeshore;
- Upgrading of the beach and day use area with associated parking;
- A new group use area of 20 units;
- Boat-in/hike-in primitive campsites scattered around the lake including some with a basic camp kitchen and one with a staging area function to Spencer Lake;
- Upgrading of the boat launching facility including provision of a floating dock and 15 boat launch parking stalls;
- Interpretive trails;
- An all-terrain vehicle staging area;
- A basic amphitheatre for interpretive programming;
- Playground equipment; and
- Seasonal staff accommodation and storage facilities.

Seibert Lake

- Minimal upgrading of the existing 35 campsites;
- New site furnishings;
- New pit toilets; and
- Seasonal accommodation for a maintenance worker.

TABLE 4 Continued...

2. PROVINCIAL PARK

Jackson, Kinnaird, Helena, and Blackett Lakes Complex

- A staging area with 10 basic campsites on the north end of Jackson Lake with a hand boat launch, parking, a vault toilet, and water supply;
- A staging area with 10 basic campsites on the southeast shore of Helena Lake with a hand boat launch, parking, a vault toilet, and water supply;
- Portages linking the various lakes;
- Primitive boat-in/hike-in campsites on each of the lakes including some with a basic camp kitchen;
- Fishing access to McGuffin Lake via an existing all-terrain vehicle trail; and
- Upgraded vehicle access to Jackson Lake and Helena Lake (Alberta Transportation and Utilities).
- Tour guiding services; and
- Equipment rentals such as canoes, boats, and tents.

3. TRAILS PROGRAM

- A network of hiking/cross-country skiing trails throughout the interlakes area and inter-connecting all development nodes;
- A network of equestrian/snowmobiling/ATV trails throughout the interlakes area and inter-connecting all development nodes; and
- All terrain vehicle access may be provided to Spencer Lake.

The Creation of a Major Park and Recreation Area

The development of this Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area will create the second largest Provincial Park in the province. This will provide a significant and obvious "green area" on travel maps, and will make tourists in the province much more aware that there is "something up there" in northern Alberta.

The sheer size of the designated area will generate visitor interest. Management of the provincially significant living resources in the area will support the long term growth of the tourism industry.

The government has indicated an intention to work with the private sector to create a range of accommodations and recreational facilities in the area. This strengthens the tourism appeal of the concept, and is likely to increase the economic impact of the park development.

The development of this major recreational feature, and its designation on provincial maps would begin to establish a strong destination identity for the study area. This scale of development may provide a strong impetus for major source markets like Edmonton and travellers on the Yellowhead highway to consider travelling to the area. If the identity can appeal to a wide range of

vacation segments, it should be able to attract more interest in fixed-roof accommodations, and thereby be a stimulus to a significant shift in the markets for the area. If this shift occurs, it will stimulate tourism development throughout the study area.

• **Analysis of Proposed Accommodation and Trails**

Moderate Range:
Pinehurst Lake Campground

The Pinehurst Lake Campground would provide additional "moderate range" lakeside accommodation, adding to the existing Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park campground (which has only partial servicing) and the Young's Beach site. Current use figures at the existing sites indicate that there is likely a demand for additional campsites on four to six weekends per year. The new development would provide a higher level of servicing than is currently available in the area. It is likely to draw visitors away from older developments, and to attract users primarily during the peak season.

There are three ways that a development such as this one could extend area markets. It could extend (a) the length of the camping season, (b) the length of stay in the area, and (c) the distance from which people will be attracted.

Extended Season: The proposed campground can be compared with a similar development at Carson-Pegasus Provincial Park. That development has shown above average occupancy levels in the months of June, July and August, but has not created a noticeable exten-

sion of the season into the autumn months. Although the Pinehurst campground would attract moderate use in winter for ice fishing, there is little evidence that the development would extend the season significantly.

Extended Length of Stay: An analysis of all of the Provincial Park and Recreation Area campgrounds within the study area indicates that there is no significant variation in length of stay, despite a variance in facilities and site characteristics. Again, Carson-Pegasus, which offers similar facilities, does not attract significantly longer stays. However, the experience of private sites in Alberta and British Columbia suggests that longer stays can be attracted if user needs are specifically predicted and planned for (e.g. boat mooring adjacent to campsite).

Extended Geographic "Reach": It is anticipated that the Pinehurst development can extend the geographic "reach" of the area only slightly. It is highly likely that the campground would create higher frequencies of visits from the same market areas that are currently attracted to the area (north Eastern central Alberta, predominantly Edmonton). More southerly markets would continue to show a resistance to travelling northwards. Targetted promotion techniques aimed at Yellowhead traffic, however, may attract visitors from western Canada and central Canada, as well as an increased percentage of Americans.

The development could also create tourism growth by stimulating higher daily expenditures from visitors. However, this would be unlikely unless private sector developments are

integrated into the development from the outset. If the campground were to be operated by the government at "below market" prices (assume \$15.00 per night as fair market value currently), and if there are few retail opportunities on-site, then regional expenditures would be expected to be low. Since Lac La Biche is the established service centre, it is a concern that most visitors would not be drawn through the town to reach the Pinehurst campground. In many cases, supplies may be purchased in communities south of the study area.

• Observations

There can be no guarantees that development of this campground as a tourism attraction would increase the economic impact of tourism in the area. Use levels and economic impact would depend to a large extent upon the capability of the planner/designer to understand and respond to very specific user needs. Even with excellent user needs analysis, there would be risks that (a) the fishery will not sustain the level and quality of fishing users expect, (b) the weather patterns will reduce use levels, or (c) the site will compete directly with other campgrounds in the area for the traditional area market. The tables on this page describe the anticipated regional impacts of a campground development at Pinehurst and Touchwood Lakes based upon the preliminary program. These estimates do not reflect any actual commitments at this time, and are provided purely for comparative purposes.

FINANCIAL ESTIMATES* ***Pinehurst & Touchwood Campgrounds***

EXPENSES	
Capital Investment	
Full Service (Redevelopment & New)	
170 Sites @ \$15,000 per Site =	\$2,550,000
Primitive (Redevelopment & New)	
100 Sites @ \$5,000 per Site =	\$500,000
TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT =	\$3,050,000
Operating Expenses	
Primitive =	\$70,000
Full Service =	\$200,000
Wages and Benefits =	\$110,000
Debt Service =	\$40,000
Lease Expenses =	\$45,000
Repair and Maintenance =	\$16,000
Utilities =	\$15,000
Supplies =	\$20,000
Other =	\$24,000
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES =	\$270,000

VISITORS (Incremental Impact)

*Incremental Sites***

3,780 Camper Nights Peak (3 Day Weekends)	
630 Camper Nights Shoulder (2 Day Weekend)	
1,890 Camper Nights (Weekdays over 20 Weeks)	
• 6,300 @ \$15,000 per Night =	\$94,500

***This would be revenue from existing sites in addition to this new revenue.*

**Adapted From:*

Alberta Department of Tourism, 1986.
Alberta's Private Campground Industry

Primitive expenses set at the industry average while full service expenses were set at one third higher than average.

Primitive Range:

Touchwood Lake Campground
(and sites at Jackson/Helena)

The upgrading of the campground at Touchwood Lake, and the continuation of its "primitive" standard, should be a very successful response to both market demands and local expectations.

The proposed development is very close to what potential campers described as being most attractive to them in this area. The Touchwood development does not represent an attempt to extend the current markets for the area, but rather an attempt to service existing markets better.

<u>REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT</u> <u>Campgrounds - Pinehurst & Touchwood</u>		
	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT (PERSON/ YEARS)
• Temporary Construction Impact	\$10,113,800	62
• Operations Impact (Annual)	\$889,234	9
• Indirect Visitor Spending Impact (Annual)	\$617,293	8
	PROVINCIAL TAXATION REVENUE	
CORPORATE		
Temporary Construction	\$35,420	•
Operations (Annual)	\$4,097	•
PERSONAL		
Temporary Construction	\$174,582	•
Operations (Annual)	\$20,972	•

The major factors determining the use levels at Touchwood are likely to be the continuation of angler success in the area, and very reasonable overnight camping fees. Walleye, the favored catch of anglers at this lake, are perceived to be already under significant pressure from sport and commercial fishermen. The markets that are attracted to the Touchwood development have shown themselves to be highly interested in catching fish, and to be highly price sensitive.

The proposed Touchwood development is unlikely to extend length of stay, or to extend the market reach of the area. However, Touchwood is a development that has already shown itself to be capable of attracting users for an extended season. Alberta Forest Service figures indicate that shoulder season use at the lake is considerably higher than summer season use.

Touchwood should generate expenditures in the study area, since all of the users have to travel through Lac La Biche, and are likely to see that community as a convenient place to purchase gas and supplies. However, this market is also likely to try to keep daily expenditures relatively low. Merchants who provide gas and lubricants for vehicles and recreation equipment, and those who provide groceries, liquor, and snack food items are likely to profit most from this development.

• Observations

The proposed development at Touchwood Lake minimizes risk by minimizing the investment cost and by preserving an established use pattern. Because of the shoulder season use at the site, this would appear to be a good investment in the area's existing markets.

Trail Development: **Jackson/Kinnaird Lake Area**

The potential to provide trails and a canoe circle route in the Jackson/Kinnaird Lake complex has been discussed in Section 6.3.2. In general, this development will be beneficial to tourism in the area. The existence of trails and water routes designed for

activities like skiing, bicycling, hiking and canoeing is likely to attract use in seasons other than the current "high" season. The trails are also likely to attract new markets within the current secondary market area, and increase the demand for tourist-oriented fixed roof accommodation in the area. Trails and waterways are also likely to support an extension of the average length of stay, because they will add variety to the activities available. The trails may also extend the geographic market to a limited degree, if they cater to specific user groups and to competitions or events.

The level of use of the trails would increase if they are tied as closely as possible to accommodation areas. At the very least, primitive cabins should be available near the trail system. The provision of moderate or deluxe fixed roof accommodation nearby would extend the market appeal further.

The most obvious way to tie trail systems to the accommodation and service area, is to provide trail access as closely as possible to the town of Lac La Biche. Suggestions for this linkage include the development of a public trail through the Portage La Biche route (see Chapter 8.0), and/or the use of the existing Shaw Lake trail area as an entry into the trail system.

While the provision of a range of trails within the study area is generally a good idea, the mixing of trail uses should be approached cautiously. In general, trails will appeal more effectively when they cater to a specific kind of trail user.

ATV trails and equestrian trails should be provided within the study

area, but it is questionable whether they should be provided within the Provincial Park. Trail users coming to the park would be less attracted if they have to share staging areas, trails, or landscapes with activities they view as incompatible. On the other hand, segregated trail use areas are entirely possible, and are likely to attract a broader following.

The canoe circle route would present an "adventure" opportunity that is unique within Alberta. While it would not have mass market appeal, it is very likely to attract visitors from considerable distances. One comparable development, Bowron Lake Provincial Park (British Columbia), attracts visitors from across North America and some Europeans and Asians.

The financial analysis and economic benefits of the proposed trail system are described in Section 6.3.2. There may be significant opportunities as well for guide/outfitters to provide services to emerging "adventure" markets.

• Overall Observations

Improved lake access, vacation accommodations, and trails in the Lakeland area will provide a wide range of benefits to northern Albertans. It is not expected that economic improvement will be the primary reason for undertaking this development. However, there is an opportunity to create economic benefits, and this opportunity should be considered when the park and recreation area are being planned. Two priorities that will improve economic benefits are (a) tying park access to the major service centre (Lac La Biche,

wherever possible, and (b) diversifying the vacation attraction to attract new markets and increase the tourism season. Strategies to encourage vacationers to spend money in the area have not been art of traditional park planning, but are likely justified at this time.

The announcement of Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area is a strong step forward for the tourism industry in the Lakeland area. In particular, it will create a much broader awareness of the resources in the area. It will also create several opportunities for the community and the private sector to become involved in enriching the economic impact of tourism in the area.

The regional economic impact of tourism will be increased if the Provincial Park development works with the private sector from the outset. There is still a significant need to determine what market segments should be targetted, and what those target markets want. There is also a need to plan ways to attract increased expenditures in the area, and to facilitate and encourage private sector investment in compatible ventures.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary

This report has examined the potential for the Lakeland study area to achieve economic improvements through the development of a recreational tourism product. The potential for this tourism attraction has been evident for many years, and was first publicly recognized by the government in the mid-1970s. Several plans and reports have preceded this analysis of tourism potential in the area (see Bibliography). Most of these reports concluded that lake activities were the primary basis for tourism development in the area. The current study reached a similar conclusion, but also found that the following factors would be important pre-requisites to success:

- (a) diversifying tourism accommodation;*
- (b) tying attractions as closely as possible to the commercial centre (Lac La Biche);*
- (c) developing land-based attractions that will attract the growing adventure, touring and "get-away" market segments; and*

- (d) developing the important historical sites in the area to broaden the appeal of the area to tourists.*

7.2 Overview of Current Status of Tourism Development

The Lakeland area has established its ability to attract campers, fishermen, and hunters. There are 11 campgrounds in the area that cater to three markets, and most attract a significant number of visitors. More than 47,000 camping nights are spent in the area each year. However, the range of camping facilities available is limited, and many are in need of capital upgrading.

There are a number of tourism developments that are proposed for the area, which are described in Table 5. Figure 7 shows the location of these developments. Many of these proposals will require significant investments, and the proponents should therefore examine market and supply conditions closely before investing.

The most significant proposal at this time is the intended designation of Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area. Along with this development, a number of improvements in access roads, campgrounds, and trail systems are proposed. These developments would create a new sense of

value and awareness about the landscape in the study area. As such, they will "anchor" further tourism development in the area.

The restoration of the Mission site is also a significant investment in the tourism industry that is largely supported by the public sector. Some interest has also been shown in the development of the Portage La Biche site.

There are a variety of private sector and community-based proposals that may also proceed. There are several proposed recreation developments on Lac La Biche near the town. These sites are well-located and offer strong potential to supply an integrated tourism destination resort. Other proposed private sector resort sites are located on Pinehurst and Elinor Lakes.

The Town of Lac La Biche has taken significant steps to help develop tourism in the area, including the development of a civic centre (McArthur Inn) and park on the lakeshore, and the development of murals in the business district.

The native and Metis communities have shown active interest in expanding their already significant involvement in the tourism industry in the area. There are proposals to develop additional campsites and services, as well as possible cabins, trails and lodges on Beaver Lake, Heart Lake, and Whitefish Lake.

Many of the current proposals for tourism development in the area are significant potential improvements for the tourism industry. However, it is a concern that too many developers seem to be assuming that "more of the same"

will be an appropriate strategy. There is potential for the area to become oversupplied with campgrounds, and still lack a diversified vacation product.

In particular, the area is poorly supplied by moderate and deluxe fixed-roof accommodation in scenic settings. There are several public projects like the Lac La Biche waterfront, Portage La Biche, the Lac La Biche Mission, and the trail systems that may create important tourism attractions that can benefit the region. The development of some of these attractions is likely to be a prerequisite to the financial success of significant fixed-roof vacation offerings in the area.

7.3 Requirements for Success

The following categorical statements describe the conditions that must be achieved if the area is to successfully expand its tourism industry.

• Conserving the Landscape and Natural Resources •

The natural landscape and resources that appeal to tourists must be conserved. Priorities should include (a) wildlife and fish habitat, (b) vegetation communities in areas along scenic roadways and trails, (c) shoreline margins of rivers and lakes.

• Development of a Theme and Image •

The area must present a more specific image to potential markets. It must differentiate itself from other similar offerings in Western Canada, and it must appeal to the needs and perceptions of high priority markets.

TABLE 5: PROPOSED TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>DEVELOPMENT</u>	<u>PROPONENTS*</u>	<u>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</u>
PRIMITIVE ACCOMMODATION	Primitive Cabin Development (Pinehurst)	Private Sector	20 Lakeside Cabins & Developed Beach Area
	Heart Lake Campground	Indian Band	Campground and Fishing Access
	Touchwood Lake Campground	Alberta Government	100 Units and Fishing Access
	Seibert Lake Campground	Alberta Government	35 Units - Trophy Fishing Access
	Pinehurst South Shore Campgrounds	Private Sector	Camping and Developed Beach Area
MODERATE ACCOMMODATION	Lac La Biche Destination Resort	Private Sector	RV Camping, Full Services, Food Outlets, Boat Rentals, Recreation & Improved Lakeshore
	Lac La Biche Recreation Complex	Private Sector	RV Camping With Bingo Hall, Billiards, Bowling & Fast-Food Outlet
	Pinehurst Campground & Resort	Alberta Government	170 Full Service Units With Day Use, Beach Area, Boat Launch, Group Camping Trails, Food Concession, Fixed-Roof Accommodation
	Lac La Biche Golf Course & Resort	Private Sector	18 Hole Deluxe Golf Course With Proposed Lakeside Resort

* The sector indicated has put forward a proposal for consideration, but is not necessarily committed to the development.

TABLE 5 Con't: PROPOSED TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>DEVELOPMENT</u>	<u>PROONENTS*</u>	<u>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</u>
DELUXE ACCOMMODATION	Beaver Lake Resort	Indian Band	Lakeside Lodge & Cabin Development With Full Amenities
	Lac La Biche Golf Course	Golf Course Association	Lakeside Resort Development Adjacent to Scenic Golf Course & Trails (Currently Proposed RV or Residential Cottaging - Consultant Suggested Lodge/Cabin)
HERITAGE SITES	Lac La Biche Mission	Historical Society	Restored Mission Buildings With Interpretation, Recreation, & Overnight Accommodation
	Portage La Biche	Tourism Action Committee	Recreation of Trail With Interpretive Displays & Canoe Opportunity
TRAIL NETWORKS	Jackson - Kinnaird Interlakes	Alberta Government	Canoe Circle Route & Network of Trails for a Range of Specific User - Possible Overnight Accommodation. Possible Long Distance ATV Connection.
	Caslan Sandhills	...	ATV & Equestrian Trails Linking Lakes & Sandhills. Possible Connection to Long Distance Route.

* The sector indicated has put forward a proposal for consideration, but is not necessarily committed to the development.

TABLE 5 Con't: PROPOSED TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>DEVELOPMENT</u>	<u>PROONENTS*</u>	<u>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</u>
UPGRADED ACCESS	Access to Pinehurst & Touchwood Lakes	Alberta Government	Road Improvements to Make Lake Access More Attractive to Tourists
	Conklin Road	Alberta Government	New Travel Route to Fort McMurray Will Bring More Traffic Through Lac La Biche, & Will Improve Access to Several Northern Lakes
	Access to Heart Lake	I.D. 18 (S) & Indian Band	Improved Access to Heart Lake
SCENIC DRIVES	South & Eastern Shores, Lac La Biche	Local Citizens	Development of Scenic Lakeshore Drive, Cycle Trails & Walking Path; Along With Signs, Wharf & Landscape Improvements at Town
	Normandeau Area	...	Improved Scenic Drive Through Interesting Landscape, With Pull-offs at Wildlife Viewing Areas & Historical Interest Points

* The sector indicated has put forward a proposal for consideration, but is not necessarily committed to the development.



• Community Awareness and Coordination •

Tourism operators in the area must make every effort to support increased awareness of the value of tourism and to coordinate their efforts to market and promote the area.

• Incremental Expansion of Markets •

The area must identify the market segments that offer the highest potential for expansion, and proceed to appeal to those markets in a targeted and incremental fashion.

• Improved Mix of Tourism Services and Opportunities •

The mix of tourism accommodation, attractions and retail services must be improved to appeal to a wider range of market segments.

• Management of the Fishery (and Wildlife) •

The fishery of the area must be kept healthy and productive, because it is critical to the continued success of tourism. There is serious doubt that the area can support both commercial fishing and increased recreational fishing, and the choice between these two will have to be made soon. The wildlife resource also requires careful monitoring and management.

• Encouraging Expenditures from Tourists •

The area must develop strategies to attract increased expenditures from visitors. These strategies might include

improved integration of attraction areas with commercial service areas, increased range of vacation accommodation and increased fees for users of attraction areas.

• Interpreting Historical Attractions •

The interpretation of several points of historical significance will be helpful in broadening the range of market appeal. Significant historical themes like the fur trade could become critical elements of the area's attraction to markets beyond Edmonton.

• Responding to Target Market Needs •

Tourism operators should all understand who the target markets are, and how their needs and expectations can best be met.

• Improving Roads, Signs, and Facilities •

Roadways should be clearly marked, and roads to attractions and scenic roads should be appropriately surfaced and signed.

• Extending the Tourism Season •

The area needs more attractions and services that draw visitors at times other than during the peak season. These services may include trails, recreational facilities, or meeting and retreat facilities.

• Integrating Area Services and Developments •

The tourist to the area should find the connection between attractions and service areas convenient and logical.

7.4 Recommended Strategies

The following strategies describe how the study area can be successfully developed.

• Key Strategies

(1) *Develop a diverse tourism attraction around the town of Lac La Biche.*

This attraction will be anchored by a developed waterfront area in the town, and by a significant golf course development. Careful development will provide a wide range of opportunities for tourists, within a short distance. Emphasis should be placed upon the town's origin as a fur trading post. As well, the development of deluxe fixed-roof accommodation on the lakeshore near the golf course would significantly broaden the existing tourism product. Private developers who have announced an intention to create camping and recreational facilities along the lakeshore should be encouraged to become part of the larger themed development (see Section 6.5).

(2) *Develop the attractive lake area southeast of Lac La Biche in a manner that diversifies the tourism product and conserves the natural resources of the area. This means that:*

(a) Private developers should be given the opportunity from the outset to develop all accommodation facilities. Developers should be encouraged to provide fixed-roof or platform tent accommodations as well as camping. Rental, food service and convenience

store facilities should be provided on-site (where feasible).

(b) Activities that do not depend upon harvest of fish and wildlife populations should be encouraged. The proposed trail and canoe network is particularly attractive. However, economic benefits of this kind of development will be greatest if accommodation and service facilities are located near access areas.

(c) The establishment of a canoe circle route is particularly attractive because it will be unique in Alberta, and will recreate elements of the fur trade history of the area.

(d) Access into Touchwood Lake and the Jackson - Kinnaird Lake complex should draw visitors through the town of Lac La Biche.

(e) Serious consideration should be given to developing strategies that recoup local expenditures from adventure tourists such as fishermen, hunters, canoeists, and wildlife viewers. In particular, outfitters should be given support in establishing guide/outfitter services that cater to a wide range of adventure vacations. As well, the development of a lodge on Seibert Lake should be considered.

(3) *Broaden the range of recreational opportunities with emphasis upon non-consumptive activities.*

The development of all season trail systems, adventure guiding services, fixed-roof accommodations that cater to

"get-away" vacations and heritage tourism sites will attract new market segments and keep visitors in the area longer. Attractive adventure opportunities that do not require consumption of wildlife resources should receive priority consideration.

(4) *Diversify the range of accommodation, with emphasis upon providing fixed-roof accommodation and a full range of attractive camping opportunities.*

The increased range of accommodation, particularly fixed-roof opportunities near lakes is needed to attract new market segments and to extend the tourism season, and the length of stay. Deluxe fixed-roof accommodations will be most feasible near Lac La Biche, while more primitive cabins may serve the area to the southeast.

(5) *Develop the heritage attractions in the area.*

Portage La Biche and an interpretive display near the site of the Hudson's Bay post would be superb additions to the range of activities available at Lac La Biche. The reconstruction of the Lac La Biche Mission will also provide an important addition to the area tourism product. The Mission attraction will be improved if ways can be found to include lakeside recreation and to include interpretation of the early role of the mission in the 19th century.

(6) *Extend the tourism season.*

The development of all-season trails in the Jackson - Kinnaird Lake complex, and in the Caslan sandhills will

help extend the season. The development of a snowmobile route should be seriously considered. The provision of fixed-roof accommodation for vacationers will also support a longer season. The hosting of cold weather events such as cross-country ski events and winter festivals will also be helpful.

(7) *Attract new markets into the area.*

If trails and recreational opportunities like the proposed canoe circle route are developed to cater to committed markets, then people will be induced to travel further to the area. Touring vacationers and Edmontonians seeking a "get-away" vacation could also be attracted.

7.5 Market Development Strategies

The Lakeland study area has successfully attracted a large following of campers, fishermen, and hunters. However, the investment in infrastructure to serve these markets has been kept low and in many cases, the road systems and camping areas now require improvements.

Regional investments should be positioned to retain the current loyal market, but also to gradually diversify the product offering and prime locations in order to:

- (a) *Attract new market segments like the "get-away" vacation segment (from north-central Alberta), the touring vacation segment (from western Canada and from Yellowhead route traffic), and adventure tourists who are attracted to the area for non-consumptive activi-***

ties, and for exclusive outfitted opportunities.

(b) Extend the length of the tourism season.

(c) Retain visitors longer and attract greater levels of expenditure from visitors.

It is a concern that many visitors to the area may currently be spending minimal amounts in the region while harvesting important living resources. Strategies to capture more dollars from fish and game harvesting should be studied.

7.6 Conclusions

There is significant interest in developing the recreation tourism industry in the Lakeland area. If the area is developed prudently, and reasonable coordination occurs, there is reason to believe that tourism developments in the area can be viable and can generate regional economic benefits.

However, the conservation of the landscape and fish and wildlife resources in the area will be critical to long term success. It will be important that cautious management of these resources is a major concern in the planning and locating of tourism developments.

The area will be best served if a few growth markets can be identified and area developments can focus upon gradually diversifying the offering to serve them. Given that significant interest has been shown by the private sector in developing vacation accommodations, the public sector should place a priority upon developing complementary

attractions such as the regional trail system, the Lac La Biche waterfront, tourist roadways, and historic sites. These attractions will begin to diversify the attraction of the area so that private sector developers can cater to a broader (and more affluent) vacation market, and begin to create a range of fixed-roof resort accommodations.

It will be difficult to coordinate area development into phases, since many parties are participating. However, it is desirable that public sector initiatives are scheduled to support private sector investment. It will be most beneficial to the area if a focal attraction such as Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area can be designated, then current user facilities can be renovated, and then development along the shorelines of Lac La Biche can be stimulated. The development of heritage sites should be coordinated with area upgrading. Trail and canoe route development can proceed in concert with the emerging tourism service centre at Lac La Biche.

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Appendix 1

Market Size and Traffic Statistics Appendix 1

Market Size and Traffic Statistics

POPULATION ESTIMATES

POPULATION OF LOCAL AND SECONDARY MARKETS

Figure 1 STUDY AREA - Population

• Atmore	37
• Beaver Lake Indian Reserve	214
• Breynat	34
• Caslan	15
• Heart Lake Indian Reserve	80
• Hylo	34
• Imperial Mills	29
• Kikino	130
• Lac La Biche	2553
• Plamondon	236
• Rich Lake	10
• Venice	18
• Wandering River	67

Total Study Area: 6914

Source: Alberta Bureau of Statistics 1987

POPULATION OF 3 HOUR DRIVING CIRCLE

• Drumheller and Area	20241
• Olds - Didsbury and Area	23212
• Provost - Stettler and Area	40681
• Red Deer - Ponoka and Area	116611
• Rocky Mountain House and Area	15999
• Camrose Vermilion and Area	79745
• Edmonton and Area	807504
• Smoky Lake - Bonnyville and Area	43907
• Athabasca - Whitecourt and Area	54973
• Hinton - Edson and Area	25309
• Fort McMurray and Area (excluding Study Area)	45322
• High Prairie - Swan Hills and Area	26230
• Valleyview and Area	4609
• Peace River and Area	16899

Total: 1321279

POPULATION OF 2 HOUR DRIVING CIRCLE

• Wainwright and Area	20293
• Ponoka and Area	7480
• Camrose - Vermilion and Area	79745
• Edmonton and Area	807504
• Smoky Lake - Bonnyville and Area	43907
• Athabasca - Whitecourt and Area	54973
• Evanskerry and Area	1127
• Fort McMurray and Area (excluding Study Area)	45322
• Slave Lake and Area	45571

Total: 1105922

Source: Alberta Bureau of Statistics, 1987

	Wainwright Stettler	Red Deer Ponoka	Camrose Vermilion	Edmonton Area	Smoky Lk. Bonnyville	Athabasca Whitecourt	Edson Hinton	Fl. McMurray	Slave Lk. High Prairie
200 Km 2 Hr. Radius	Census Division 7 (50%)	C. D. 8 (6.4%)	C. D. 10 (100%)	C. D. 11 (100%)	C. D. 12 (100%)	C. D. 13 (100%)	C. D. 14 (4.5%)	C. D. 16 (99%)	C. D. 17 93%
Population (1986)	40681	116611	79745	807504	43907	54973	25309	48779	48852
Single (never married), ≥ 15 years of age	7010	22350	14080	173490	8290	9495	4295	9545	9660
Married, with children	6030	16580	11685	116680	6735	8215	4085	7980	7280
Married, no children	6030	16580	11685	116680	6735	8215	4085	7980	7280
Census Families in Private Households	10630	30755	20960	211275	11040	14590	6660	12150	11230
Average Family Income	35397	36586	35049	41463	34342	30838	38508	50447	31896

	Drumheller	Turner Valley	Weinright Steffler	Red Deer Ponoka	Rocky Mtn. House	Camrose Vermilion	Edmonton Area	Smoky Lk. Bonnyville	Althabasca Whitecourt	Edson Hinton	Fl. McMurray	Slave Lk. High Prairie	Valleyview	Grande Prairie
300 Km 2 Hr. Radius	C.D. 5 (70%)	C.D. 6 (3.2%)	C.D. 7 (100%)	C.D. 8 (100%)	C.D. 9 (100%)	C.D. 10 (100%)	C.D. 11 (100%)	C.D. 12 (100%)	C.D. 13 (100%)	C.D. 14 (100%)	C.D. 16 (99%)	C.D. 17 (55.4%)	C.D. 18 (34%)	C.D. 19 (23%)
Population (1996)	38805	715605	40681	116611	15999	79745	807504	43907	454973	25309	48779	48852	13587	72997
Single (never married), ≥ 15 years of age	7320	152940	7010	22350	2735	14080	173490	8290	9495	4295	9545	9660	2555	13365
Married, with children	5385	101900	6030	16560	2525	11685	116680	6735	8515	4085	7980	7280	2190	11225
Married, no children	3460	64065	3825	10575	1265	7510	66895	3225	5020	1935	2800	2585	815	5490
Census Families in Private Households	9770	189230	10630	30755	4175	20960	211275	11040	14590	6660	12150	11230	3310	18715
Average Family Income	34161	45407	35397	38586	33441	35049	41463	34342	30838	38508	50447	31896	35575	37067

TRAFFIC STATISTICS (1988)

LOCATION	AADT*	ASDT**	PASS.	VEHICLE CLASS		
				REC.	BUS.	TRUCK
• Hwy 55 - W of 881 W of Truman	230	260	81.7	4.2	4.2	10.0
• Hwy 36 - S of 55 Lac La Biche (S.J.)	560	610	79.5	9.1	3.4	8.0
• Hwy 663 - E of 855 E of Caslan	560	620	76.0	12.9	1.1	10.0
• Hwy 858 * - N of Plamondon	990	1110	94.6	2.6	0	2.8
• Hwy 855 - W of 868 & 881 SW of Imperial Mills	220	250	91.8	3.3	0	4.9
• Hwy 855 - N of 663 East of Caslan	30	40	61.9	0	33.3	4.8
• Hwy 855 - S of 663 East of Caslan	230	250	88.3	4.3	3.7	3.8
• Hwy 63 - N of Wandering River	1140	1280	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
• Hwy 55 * - E of 866 NW of Briereville	260	290	70.5	13.3	0	16.2
• Hwy 55 * - W of 866 NW of Briereville	340	380	74.9	9.6	0	15.63
• Hwy 55 - W of 867 SE of Rich Lake	270	290	82.33	8.96	0	8.9
<i>Source: Alberta Transportation Traffic Engineering Branch</i>						

* AADT = Average Annual Daily Traffic

** ASDT = Average Summer Daily Traffic

***PASS = Passenger Vehicles

REC = Recreation Vehicles

BUS = Busses

TRUCK = Single Unit and Tractor Trailer Trucks

* 1987 Data

Appendix 2:

Accommodation & Outdoor Recreation

CAMPGROUND FACILITIES

NAME	NO. OF SITES
• BEAVER LAKE RECREATION AREA (P.P.)*	140
• MILE 18 (A.F.)	10
• SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL PROVINCIAL PARK (P.P.)	90
• SPRUCE POINT RESORT (P.O)	160
• TOUCHWOOD LAKE (A.F.)	91
• YOUNG'S BEACH CAMPGROUND (P.O)	90
• PLAMONDON BEACH RECREATION AREA (P.P.)	69
• PINEHURST LAKE (A.F.)	65
• IRONWOOD LAKE (A.F.)	17
• NORTH BUCK LAKE RECREATION AREA (P.P.)	100
• WANDERING RIVER (A.F.)	14
• WANDERING RIVER REST AREA (A.T.)	—
• FORK LAKE RECREATION AREA (P.P.)	61
• DIESEL OWL HOOT CABINS & CAMPGROUND (P.O.)	20
• MISSAWAWI BEACH RECREATION AREA (P.P.)	25
• CHUMP LAKE CAMPGROUND (M)	23
TOTAL SITES IN AREA	975

* P.O. = Private Operator; P.P. = Provincial Park;
M = Municipal; AT = Alberta Transportation;
AF = Alberta Forestry

Source: Alberta Accommodation Guide 1989 & Equus Consulting Group

CAMPING & DAY USE OF PROVINCIAL PARK FACILITIES

DAY USE - Visitors

PARK	1987/88	1988/89
Sir Winston Churchill Park	6700	6325
Beaver Lake Recreation Area	825	2405
Fork Lake Recreation Area	355	5320
Missawawi Recreation Area	265	150
North Buck Lake Recreation Area	710	6270
Plamondon Beach Recreation Area	130	3175
TOTAL	8,935	23,645

CAMPING

PARK	CAMPSITE NIGHTS	
	1987/88	1988/89
Sir Winston Churchill Park	3952	4385
Beaver Lake Recreation Area	5568	5939
Fork Lake Recreation Area	2551	2208
Missawawi Recreation Area	1836	1141
North Buck Lake Recreation Area	5877	5417
Plamondon Beach Recreation Area	818	503
TOTAL	20,602	19,593

Source: Alberta Recreation & Parks

CAMPING & DAY USE OF ALBERTA FOREST SERVICE CAMPGROUNDS

DAY USE

PARK	1988
Ironwood Lake	62
Touchwood Lake	165
Wandering River	359
TOTAL	586

CAMPING

PARK	1988
Ironwood Lake	3677
Pinehurst Lake	15355
Touchwood Lake	7110
Wandering River	526
TOTAL	26,668

TOTAL USE EXTRAPOLATED: combined percent use x no. of days/month

- unknown factors are added in which inflate the figures.

Source: Alberta Forest Service

PARTICIPATION RATES IN SELECTED PROVINCIAL PARK CATEGORIES

ACTIVITIES	FISHING PARKS	BOATING/ FISHING PARKS	STOPOVER PARKS
Family with or without children	46.2%	46.4%	49.4%
2 or more families	16.4%	13.7%	12.0%
Average party size	4.3 ± 0.16 people	4.5 ± 0.23 people	4.1 ± 0.25 people
Day users	28.1%	21.3%	30.0%
Campers	71.9%	78.7%	70.7%
Average # of nights (camper nights)	4.6 ± 0.46 nights	3.8 ± 0.19 nights	3.4 ± 0.57 nights
Weekend/evening	55.4%	44.2%	38.2%
Major vacation destination	18.8%	19.8%	9.6%
One stop on a vacation tour	13.1%	21.9%	27.4%
Overnight travel accommodation stop	0.9%	2.0%	12.6%
Average travel distance (kilometers)	155.6 ± 6.1 km	187.5 ± 8.1 km	196.8 ± 12.2 km
Fishing from a boat	29.9%	28.0%	3.8%
Fishing from shore	27.2%	16.4%	10.5%
Picnicking/eating outdoors	38.6%	59.9%	52.1%
Sunbathing	11.8%	22.4%	11.2%
Swimming	12.8%	16.0%	6.7%
Walking for pleasure/strolling	31.1%	50.8%	18.2%
Trail hiking	2.5%	15.0%	2.5%
Group social activities	3.0%	11.0%	2.1%

Source: Analysis of park user survey date 1982 - 1988
Alberta Provincial Park Service

LAKELAND TOURISM DESTINATION STUDY

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

FEBRUARY, 1990.

METHODOLOGY

The basic data collection tool for assessing attitudes towards the Lakeland area as a tourism destination area was the deployment of two focus groups.

The target respondents were to represent households which had participated in a holiday of at least seven days duration during the past 2 years. The holiday would have been by private vehicle. Focus group one was aimed at respondents who have families and whose children accompanied the adults on the vacation. Focus group 2 was to involve empty nest households (not retired).

Due to the nature of the potential development in the destination area, an additional screening dimension was introduced in respondent recruitment. There was a deliberate attempt to obtain a reasonable balance in each focus group between those who took their vacation by camping or using their "R.V." and those who took their vacation by renting fixed roof accommodation.

Recruiting for the focus groups took place over the period February 12 to February 16. The focus groups were held on Friday, February 16 and Tuesday, February 20, 1990. Both focus groups were held in Edmonton.

The profile of focus group participants was as follows:

EMPTY NEST

Camper/R.V. users	5
Fixed Roof Accommodation	5

FAMILIES

Camper/R.V. users	6
Fixed Roof Accommodation	5

The focus group participants worked through a series of questions respecting their vacation patterns and then completed a "conjoint exercise" at the end of the focus group. The conjoint exercise was intended to develop some quantitative measure of the trade-offs each group was prepared to make when selecting a vacation destination.

RESULTS

The focus group results are presented by question. Where there are distinct differences between campers and those who travel using fixed roof accommodation, these differences are identified in the results.

All respondents were familiar with the Lakeland area but only four had spent vacation time in the area. All of these had taken a camping oriented vacation.

QUESTION THEME 1

Based upon your personal impressions or perceptions, what about this area do you find attractive? What most makes you want to visit this area?

A number of amenities/features were put forth by the respondents. These are presented in declining order of importance for campers with corresponding results for vacationers who prefer fixed roof [these respondents will be referred to as "Fixed Roof" for the remainder of the report].

A simple weighting scheme was used to rank the items for each response group. With small samples it is difficult to determine precise percentage distributions. To provide some insight, the weightings were used to assign a position of high, medium and low attractiveness [3 is very attractive, 2 is moderately attractive and 1 is unattractive].

FEATURE	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
Good Lakes	3	3
Good Boating	3	2
Not developed (wilderness)	3	1
Quiet and remote	2	3
Good Fishing	2	2
Good access	1	2
Hiking	1	2
Untouched area	1	1
Developed facilities	1	3

For the camper group, the dominant features were good lakes, good boating and undeveloped area. The pattern shifted for the fixed roof group. They preferred good lakes, quiet and remote area, and developed facilities.

The results did not shift in pattern between empty nest and family respondents. The critical dimension appears to be related to whether the respondent takes a vacation using a fixed roof or a camping format rather than whether they are from the empty nest segment or the family segment.

QUESTION THEME 2

What do you think are the weaknesses of the Area? What are its deficiencies as a tourism destination area?

The results were collected in a similar manner to the first question. In this section, a rank of 3 is a major deficiency, 2 is a moderate deficiency and 1 means the item is not considered a deficiency.

FEATURE	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
Weather	3	3
Roads	2	2
Access	1	2
Too far	1	2
Poor beaches	2	3
Bugs	2	2
Facilities not developed	1	3
Little to see	2	2

Fixed roof respondents were far more critical of the area than campers. The fixed roof respondents indicated that they perceived a shortage of facilities, poor beaches and poor weather as the major weaknesses of the area as a tourism area. The campers agreed on the issue of poor weather but felt less inhibited by the other features. For example, the campers are totally unaffected by access, distance, and lack of developed facilities. They are only moderately affected by roads, bugs, and beaches. Both respondents groups were moderately affected by the perception that there is little to see in the area.

The respondents did not generate a lengthy list for either question 1 or question 2. This has been interpreted to reflect the fact that none of the fixed roof sample and only 4 of the camper sample had taken a vacation in the area.

These results led to a supplementary question on geographic direction for their vacation. The fixed roof respondents indicated that they looked west and south from Edmonton and did not consider the Lakeland area as destination area. The campers were split in their response. Those that had a tendency to take destination vacations within Alberta had considered (or visited) Lakeland as well as other Alberta sites. Those that had taken camping vacations both inside and outside Alberta had a tendency to consider mountain destinations as well as the Pacific Northwest.

QUESTION THEME 3

What sort of experience would be most attractive to you?

<u>CAMPERS</u> CHOICES	RANK					MEAN SCORE
	1	2	3	4	5	
Festival	1	1	3	4	1	3.3
Family/social	2	3	2	1	2	2.8
Outdoor recreation [adventure]	4	4	1	1	0	1.9
Cultural	2	1	2	1	4	3.4
Solitude	1	1	2	3	3	3.6

The camper group have a strong preference for outdoor recreation, followed by family/social events. They were very similar on the ranking of festivals, cultural events, and solitude. The low ranking of solitude appears to be an extreme response. That is, it may be expected that people who camp have a stronger preference for being alone with their own small group [family]. However, they indicated the strong preference that guides their vacation decision is outdoor recreation and adventure.

The same issue was developed for the fixed roof respondents. The results shift a little from the camper group. The campers show a stronger tendency towards outdoor recreation and family/social while the fixed roof respondents were a little stronger towards festivals and cultural events. As was the case in the above section, there was no substantive difference between family and empty nest respondents. If one looks for slight trends, the empty nest respondents were a little stronger on family, cultural events and festivals and families were stronger on recreation activities.

<u>FIXED ROOF</u> CHOICES	RANK					MEAN SCORE
	1	2	3	4	5	
Festival	2	2	1	3	2	3.1
Family/social	2	1	3	2	2	3.1
Outdoor recreation [adventure]	4	3	2	0	1	2.1
Cultural	2	3	2	1	2	2.8
Solitude	0	1	2	4	3	3.9

QUESTION THEME 4

If you took a trip in your private vehicle, what sort of accommodation would you seek (all choices stated below are assumed to be available).

To make the response pattern meaningful, the respondents were asked to identify their primary interest in accommodation type. Thus, the following table only states first choice even though they may select another choice on a less frequent or less desirable basis.

FEATURE	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
Hotel/motel (in town)	1	3
Campground	7	0
Cabins (lakeside)	2	4
Lodge (lakeside)	1	3

Respondents from the camper group dominated their response pattern with campgrounds while the respondents from the fixed roof group were inclined to consider a range of accommodation options [70% did select fixed roof accommodation that was lakeside].

QUESTION THEME 5

What sort of conveniences and services would you want nearby?

The respondents were asked to list all items that came to mind. The data show the number of respondents who selected each category.

FEATURE	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
Convenience store	9	2
Service Station	7	5
Restaurant	2	9
Equipment rentals	5	6
Lounge/club	2	8
Boat cruises/boat rentals	2	6
Golf facilities	4	4
Horseback riding	3	1
Hiking/guides	1	3
Medical aid	3	1

The response patterns are very different for the two groups. The campers are very interested in the convenience store and the service station. Beyond this point, they are much more self sufficient in their vacation pattern. The fixed roof respondents were much stronger with respect to related facilities such as food services, equipment rentals, lounge/club and boating activities. The data did not show major distinctions between empty nest and families. It may be noted that the 2 camper respondents who selected the restaurant both were from the family focus group and the respondents who indicated access to medical aid were all from the family group.

QUESTION THEME 6

Would you like to take scenic drives through the area? W. would make your scenic drive particularly interesting enjoyable?

TAKE DRIVE	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
Yes	6	8
No	5	2

DRIVE ENJOYABLE	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
Historic sites	2	4
Wildlife viewing	3	4
Natural scenery (viewpoints)	2	5
Old west sites	2	3
Historical landmarks	3	5
Touring trip (site to site)	2	4

The fixed roof respondents show a stronger tendency to take a scenic drive. The greater reluctance on the part of the campers may be related to the fact that they feel they are in the centre of the area already and that the various attractions are either close to them or that they can access them as they wish.

The fixed roof respondents appear to be looking for this type of scenic drive with a greater frequency. This means that they feel that their fixed roof accommodation does not provide all of the attractions in the area and they seek ways to get out into the surrounding area and away from the fixed roof accommodation location.

QUESTION THEME 7

Rate the following attractions on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 = highly interested and 1 = not very interested.

The data were collected and developed into mean scores so that the accommodation options could be ranked according to the response group. The samples are small so mean scores are more useful than data that is spread out over 10 categories.

Part A: Accommodations

FEATURE	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
A primitive campground on an attractive lake, with excellent fishing available.	7.3	2.6
A full service campground with recreational amenities, rentals and daylodge on an attractive lake with good fishing available.	6.7	5.1
Deluxe cabins located on a scenic lakeshore setting with good fishing available.	5.1	6.2
A major lakeside resort, combining full service camping, cabins, daylodge, restaurant, convenience store, tennis courts, golf course, located on an attractive lake with fishing and boating available.	4.2	7.4
A deluxe full-service lodge located in a wooded lakeside setting with a full range of guided and casual recreation opportunities available: fishing, hunting, trails for hiking and skiing, trail riding, golfing, sportsfield, canoeing.	2.3	6.5

The selection of each category is very much a reflection of the type of vacation pattern followed by the respondent. The campers are much more favourably disposed towards the camping area with preference for the primitive site followed closely by the developed full service campground. They show little interest in the deluxe full service lodge.

The fixed roof respondents show a strong preference for the fixed roof options with the highest preference for the major lakeside resort. They show little interest in a primitive campground except for a one time type of camping experience.

The responses were not affected by the empty nest versus family characteristic except in that the families were not as interested in the deluxe full service lodge and indicated a stronger preference for the lakeside cabins or the lakeside resort.

Part B: Attractions

ATTRACTION	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
A restored 1870's mission in a lakeside setting with interpretation, retail sales, restaurant and recreation opportunities.	6.2	7.1
A recreation of the portage route that Peter Fidler and David Thompson used in the 18th century, featuring interpretive signs and displays.	6.4	6.9
An extensive recreational trails system, supported by service and rental centres and by trailside shelters, and historic and natural history interpretation signs.	6.8	4.7
A scenic driving route with pull-offs that offer information about historic and natural points of interest, as well as roadside picnic and wildlife observation areas.	5.7	6.7

Overall, the respondents have a strong response to all attractions. The weakest response was from the fixed roof respondents who indicated less interest in the recreation trails system. The remainder are very close in response pattern.

The empty nest respondents showed a slightly higher interest in the historic mission, the portage route, and in the trail system in the camper group.

QUESTION THEME 8

What activities would you most like to pursue in the area?

ACTIVITIES	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
Boating	7	2
Fishing	6	2
Hiking	4	4
Scenic Drives	2	5
Trail riding	4	4
Golf	2	5
Tennis	1	5
Shopping for artifacts	2	4

ACTIVITIES (continued)	CAMPERS	FIXED ROOF
Visiting historic sites	2	3
Hunting	3	2
Camping	9	1
Family gathering	3	3
Swimming	5	4

The fixed roof respondents show a stronger tendency to use "facilities" in their activities (golf, tennis, scenic drives) while the campers show more tendency towards the activities that would surround the campground (camping, boating, fishing).

CONJOINT TRADE-OFF EXERCISE

Conjoint analysis was used to determine the trade-offs the respondents make when selecting among vacation options. The technique allows for the calculation of the relative weight assigned to each variable by the respondent and to determine the "ideal" product mix. The technique is relatively easy to use but is very sophisticated in that respondents are unable to control all of the options in their mind so they are unable to determine trade-offs that they believe they are making. Often the result is that respondents will say that one item is important in their decision but the conjoint reveals that the decision is, in fact, dominated by another variable.

The respondents were asked to rank six fixed format cards that contained information on amenities, price, and location. This technique forces the respondent to rank the options as presented on each card. He/she is not allowed to rearrange the formats. Each card contains one level of each variable: that is, one price, one amenities set and one location.

The formats on the cards were selected from previously determined orthogonal arrays that have been developed for conjoint use. The technique allows for the generation of trade-off data without using all possible combinations and under small sample size conditions.

The conjoint variables were as follows:

AMENITIES: a1 primitive (no running water)
a2 full-service (store, electricity, showers)
a3 deluxe (jacuzzi, restaurant, guide)

PRICE: b1 \$5.00 to \$20.00 (campground)
b2 \$40.00 to \$70.00 (cabins)
b3 \$50.00 to \$150.00 (lodge)

LOCATION: c1 adjacent to town
c2 10 kilometres off highway (pavement)
c3 15 kilometres off highway (gravel)

GENERAL CONJOINT RESULTS

VARIABLES	CAMPER	FIXED ROOF
Amenities	0.20	0.39
Price	0.47	0.25
Location	0.33	0.38

The general results indicate that the camper decision framework is dominated by price followed by location and then amenities. This data indicates that they prefer low price, and will trade-off for fewer amenities and will travel further and on gravel to obtain their "ideal" product price.

The fixed roof decision maker has a very different trade-off set. They will trade-off price (i.e., pay more) to have the higher level of amenities and they prefer the location close to town or on pavement. They will pay more to avoid the gravel route.

IDEAL PRODUCT

VARIABLES	CAMPER
Amenities	a1: primitive (no running water)
Price	b1: \$5.00 to \$20.00 (campground)
Location	c3: 15 kilometres off highway (gravel)

VARIABLES

Amenities

Price

Location

FIXED ROOF

a3/a2: deluxe or full-service

b3: \$50.00 to \$150.00

c1: adjacent to town

The conjoint data indicates two very distinct market segments. This means that different promotional programs and facilities development will be necessary to attract both user groups.

Appendix 4:

Local Events & Sports Tournaments

- Humdinger Daze - Plamondon
- Harvest Festival - Plamondon
- Lac La Biche Blue Feather Fish Derby & Pow-wow
- Beaver Lake Pow-wow
- Native Perspective Good Times Jamboree - Lac La Biche
- Farmer's Market - Lac La Biche
- Lac La Biche Mid Winter Festival
- Curling Bonspiels
- Cross Country Ski Loppets - Lac La Biche Nordic Ski Club
- Trap Shooting Competitions - Lac La Biche Shooting Association

Appendix 5:

Tourism Facilities & Services

- Atmore Community Centre
- Caslan Recreation Centre
- Plamondon Arena
- Lac La Biche Recreation Centre
- Lac La Biche Community Library
- Atmore Service Garage
- Bosse Service & Welding - Plamondon
- Caslan Mohawk Henson Service
- Lakeland Sales & Service - Lac La Biche
- Len's Tag's (Husky Gas Station)
- Ocheltree Confectionery and Gas - Wandering River
- Petro Canada - Lac La Biche
- Squirrely's Car Wash and Food Mart - Lac La Biche
- Wandering River Esso
- Lac La Biche Post (Newspaper)
- Anglican Church - Lac La Biche
- Evangelical Free Church - Lac La Biche
- United Church of Canada - Lac La Biche
- Plamondon Museum
- Hylo Agricultural Museum

Appendix 6:

Top Ten Community Tourism Action Plan Priorities

Town of Lac La Biche TOURISM OBJECTIVES

1. To have a full-time tourism director
2. To develop a comprehensive market strategy
3. To establish a tourism theme
4. To encourage park development along Churchill Drive
5. To encourage development of local historic resources
6. To produce a media package
7. To encourage the Province to pave all major roads in the region
8. To encourage hiring of a full-time special events co-ordinator
9. To encourage development of an industry hospitality training program
10. To encourage development of a recreational vehicle parking area

**Note: Community Tourism Action Plans have not yet been completed for
Improvement District 18 (S) Beaver Lake Indian Reserve,
Heart Lake Indian Reserve, Buffalo Lake and Kikimo Metis Settlement,
Villages of Caslan and Plamondon**

Appendix 7:

Potential Local Market for Historic Site School Tours

Grade 4 students cover "**Alberta: Its People in History**" in their Social Studies curriculum.

For the Lac La Biche area the following numbers of students are enrolled in Grade 4.

Lac La Biche School Division #51	185
Lakeland School District #5460	287
Lakeland RCSSD #150	131
TOTAL	603

*Source: Alberta Education, Grants Administration Unit

These figures are as of September 30, 1989 and are subject to adjustment.

Appendix 8:

Personal Contacts

Lakeland

John Coli	- Almac Hotel, Vice President, Zone One
Ernest Thom	- Metis Association of Alberta - Metis Canada Representative
Linda Young	- La Biche Inn/ - Youngs Beach Campground
Leon Rutiger	- Squirrely's Esso Service, Lac La Biche
Paul Rutiger	- Squirrely's Esso Service, Lac La Biche
Paul Duchesne	- Businessman, Lac La Biche
Fred Alexandruk	- Pinehurst Lake Wilderness Resort
Derek Pachal	- Director, Regional Economic Development Council, Lac La Biche
Kim Piquette	- Tourism Co-ordinator, Blueprint For the Future, Lac La Biche
Doug Piquette	- Director, Blueprint For the Future, Lac La Biche
Tom Maccagno	- President, Lac La Biche Mission Society
Brian Stratichuk	- Secretary, Lac La Biche Mission Society
Lorraine Umble	- Administration, Lac la Biche Mission Society
Ken Staples	- Manager, Beaver Lake Indian Band
Horace Patemaude (and council members)	- Chairman, Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement Council
Mike Cardinal	- Member of the Legislative Assembly, Athabasca- Lac La Biche

Community Review Sessions

1. January 29, 1990 - Review by regional representatives of the Provincial Government departments: Forestry, Lands and Wildlife; Culture and Multiculturalism; Tourism; Recreation and Parks, and Energy.
2. March 13, 1990 - Review by community leaders.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Beaver Lake Pow-Wow

- (1) VISITATION - (#s, length of stay):** Approximately 2,500 to 3,000 people attended the three day event in 1989.
- (2) MARKET - (origin, segments):** The majority of the market is in northeastern Alberta, particularly native communities in the region.
- (3) HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** 1988 was the first year that the Beaver Lake Pow-Wow was held.
- (4) CURRENT PLANS - (changes, marketing initiatives):** N/A.
- (5) YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Event held annually on the August long weekend.
- (6) PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** None available.
- (7) OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** Activities at the Pow-Wow include traditional native events, hand games, fastball tournaments, dances, arts and crafts, etc.. A teepee village is set up for accommodation (45 teepees in 1989).

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Farmer's Market

- (1) **VISITATION - (*#s, length of stay*):** No formal visitation statistics are maintained.
The number of stall holders (merchants) ranges from 10 to 25 at each market.
- (2) **MARKET - (*origin, segments*):** Approximately 85% of the market is local in origin,
with approximately 15% from Edmonton.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** The market has been operating for approximately
10 years.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS - (*changes, marketing initiatives*):** There are no changes
planned for the future.
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** The market is held every Friday between
April and mid-October.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** None available.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** N/A.

• Contact: Harvey Yoder
(403) 623-5218

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Harvest Festival (Plamondon)
[Association Canadienne Francais de Plamondon Regionale]

Annual festival with different themes each year. Previous themes have been: Pioneers, Youth, Farmers, Local Artisans, and 10 Year Anniversary Salute in 1989.

- (1) **VISITATION - (#s, length of stay):** The festival usually takes place over a weekend, or on a Saturday. The banquet and dance attracts 200 to 300 people.
- (2) **MARKET - (origin, segments):** The majority of the market is from the local surrounding area, however, some do come from Edmonton and Fort McMurray.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** First festival held in 1979.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS - (changes, marketing initiatives):** Planning to draw more visitors by inviting Quebecois artists and promoting local musician/singer, Crystal Plamondon.
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Event occurs in late October or early November to coincide with the end of the harvest.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** Brochures will be available later in 1990.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The 1989 Harvest Festival occurred over a period of one week, as it was a special tenth anniversary celebration. Activities at the festival include: craft show, concerts, banquet, talent shows.

• **Contact:** Rosemarie Menard
(403) 798-3896

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Historic Steam Engine Tour

- (1) VISITATION - (*#s, length of stay*):** The initial concept is for three day excursions on long weekends in the summer months.
- (2) MARKET - (*origin, segments*):** Edmonton and area.
- (3) HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** Not operating yet.
- (4) CURRENT PLANS - (*changes, marketing initiatives*):** N/A.
- (5) YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Seasonal.
- (6) PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** None available.
- (7) OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** A group of railway engineers in Jasper rebuilt a historic steam engine which was then purchased by Alberta Tourism. Representatives from the Alberta Railroad Museum have approached interested parties in the Lac La Biche with the concept of running a luxury train tour package on long weekends between Edmonton and Lac La Biche.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Lac La Biche Cultural Civic Centre

- (1) VISITATION - (*#s, length of stay*):** No statistics available.
- (2) MARKET - (*origin, segments*):** They expect the market to be local in origin.
- (3) HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** Official opening in 1991.
- (4) CURRENT PLANS - (*changes, marketing initiatives*):** Under construction.
- (5) YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Year round.
- (6) PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** None available.
- (7) OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The Cultural Civic Centre was built on the site of the old Lac La Biche Inn which was destroyed by fire in 1987. The town of Lac La Biche built the new Centre in a style reminiscent of the Inn. The Centre will house a community meeting facility, tea room, souvenir shop, library, civic archive, and civic offices.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Lac La Biche Golf and Country Club

- (1) VISITATION - (*#s, length of stay*):** 10,000 rounds of golf were played in 1989.
There are approximately 175 members.
- (2) MARKET - (*origin, segments*):** Most of the market is in the Lac La Biche area.
Visitors, staying in campgrounds in the area also make up part of the market.
- (3) HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** Course opened in 1959.
- (4) CURRENT PLANS - (*changes, marketing initiatives*):** They are currently adding an additional nine holes to be completed sometime in 1990 (total - 18 holes).
- (5) YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Seasonal, from May 1 to mid-October.
- (6) PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** No brochure.
- (7) OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The golf course is located five kilometres east of Lac La Biche on the road to Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Lac La Biche Midwinter Festival

- (1) VISITATION - (#s, length of stay):** Approximately 150 to 200 volunteers were involved with the festival and approximately 1,500 spectators were present at the 1989 festival.
- (2) MARKET - (origin, segments):** In 1989, many of the competitors in volleyball, hockey, ski races, and ice sculpting came from all over Alberta. The majority of spectators came from local areas, with some from the Edmonton and Fort McMurray areas.
- (3) HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** The first Midwinter Festival was held in March, 1989.
- (4) CURRENT PLANS - (changes, marketing initiatives):** They purposefully kept the first Festival small and now plan to promote future events. Promotion through Alberta Ice Sculptors Association and Cross-Country Ski Association. Future plans include holding the Western Canadian Ice Sculpting Competition, Western Canadian Ice Races (automobiles and motorcycles, etc).
- (5) YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Annual event held on the first weekend in March.
- (6) PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** None available.
- (7) OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** Lac La Biche hosted the 1988 northeastern Alberta Winter Games, and local organizers adopted the concept of an annual winter festival in Lac La Biche. Activities at the festival include broomball, old-timers hockey, art shows, sleigh rides, toboggan runs, parachuting, shuffleboard and billiards (organized by Heritage Society), darts (organized by the Legion), snow golf, polar bear swim, volleyball tournament, ski loppet, dance, ice sculpting, and a fireworks display.

The Lac La Biche ice is particularly good for ice sculpting because of its unpolluted, clear character.

GENERATOR: Lac La Biche Mission

- (1) **DESCRIPTION OF GENERATOR:** The Lac La Biche Mission was founded in 1853 and named Notre Dame des Victoires. It was moved to its current location, five kilometres west of Lac La Biche in 1856. There are four major historical themes: (I) early missionary activity in the northwest; (II) early church sponsored education in the northwest; (III) pre-railway transportation centre in the west; and (IV) industrial skills development in pre-industrial society.

The Mission is currently undergoing a major restoration project. Current plans, if funding is received, are for establishing the Mission as a major tourist attraction. The Mission structure, interpretive programs, and archaeological excavation will attract visitors.

- (2) **PROPOSED BY:** The Lac La Biche Mission Historical Preservation Society.
- (3) **PROJECTED VISITATION:** Between 40,000 and 150,000 visitors, annually, are expected to visit the Mission after restoration.
- (4) **INVESTMENT REQUIRED:** The projected capital costs are 3.5 to 5 million dollars.
- (5) **HISTORY OF PROPOSAL:** The initial impetus for the proposal came from the creation of the Lac La Biche Mission Historical Preservation Society in 1980. In 1987, the Society commissioned the feasibility study for the redevelopment of the Lac La Biche Mission.
- (6) **CURRENT STATUS:** Restoration and stabilization is currently being completed.
- (7) **CURRENT PLANS:** The Society is awaiting more funding for future restoration.
- (8) **DESCRIPTION OF MARKETS:** Currently the origin of most of the market is central Alberta. The types of visitors to the Mission are: (I) Alberta residents with their out-of-town guests; (II) local school groups; (III) vacationers, passing through the area who stop in when they see the road signs; and (IV) tour groups (bus tours passing through the area or V.I.P. tours from Edmonton).
- (9) **COMMUNITY RESPONSE:** There has been tremendous support for the Mission restoration from the community.
- (10) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS - (available/copy provided):** Brochures will be developed for the future. An existing brochure will be sent to the Equus Consulting Group.
- (11) **UNIQUE ATTRACTIVE ELEMENTS:** In addition to the historical importance of the Mission structure, the site itself is of archaeological significance. There will

be excavations done on the site in the next three years. There are plans for public information sessions about the archaeological findings and, potentially, public tours of the site.

- (12) COMPARATIVE SITES:**
- Batoche in Saskatchewan;
 - Fort Langley in British Columbia

The Mission Society believes that because they are restoring the site to its original 1860s state, and because of the significance of the site to western Canada, the Mission will be more of an attraction than any other comparable sites.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Lac La Biche Nordic Ski Club

- (1) **VISITATION - (#s, length of stay):** The club has 70 members and 40 children (Jackrabbits). Approximately 60 to 100 people come on weekend outings. Length of stay is one day - no overnight facilities.
- (2) **MARKET - (origin, segments):** The majority of visitors come from Edmonton, Fort McMurray, and the Lac La Biche area. Special events such as Alberta Loppet Series ski races attract competitors from all over Alberta.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** The ski club began in 1986.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS - (changes, marketing initiatives):** Eventually, they are hoping to expand their trail system to a "Day-Trail" system with two ski-in cabins for overnight stays. This plan is currently awaiting funding.
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Winter season.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** N/A.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The ski club operates in the Shaw Lake area with approximately 20 kilometres of groomed cross-country ski trails. They are part of the Alberta Loppet Series which periodically involves ski races being hosted by the Lac La Biche Ski Club.

The cost of a membership is \$12.00 per person, and \$25.00 for a family.

**TOURIST ATTRACTION: Lac La Biche Pow-Wow and
Blue Feather Fish Derby Weekend**

- (1) **VISITATION** - (*#s, length of stay*): There are no formal visitation statistics maintained. The event lasts for four days, and many tourists base their summer holidays around it (estimate is between 4,000 to 6,000, over a four day period).
- (2) **MARKET** - (*origin, segments*): Visitors originate from all over the province, plus Saskatchewan. Major origins: Edmonton; Fort McMurray; local towns; and Calgary.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** 28 years.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS** - (*changes, marketing initiatives*): Up until recently, the weekend had a native Indian/Metis theme. However, the Beaver Lake Indian Band started their own annual Pow-Wow on the same weekend two years ago, so the Lac La Biche Pow-Wow and Fish Derby Association is trying to develop a multicultural theme.
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Annually on the first weekend in August.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** No brochures available.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** This event, run by volunteers, involves the following:
 - a major fishing derby;
 - ethnic displays (multicultural theme);
 - sporting events such as sailboat races, waterskiing, canoe races, baseball, volleyball, triathlon (very popular), etc.;
 - a parade with floats from local groups and various government agencies;
 - a midway;
 - arts and crafts displays;
 - beerfests;
 - dances;
 - bingo;
 - concerts;
 - "fish fry"; etc..

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Lac La Biche Shooting Association

- (1) VISITATION - (*#s, length of stay*):** In 1989, the Association had 69 members. The number of visitors during competitions is variable. They expect approximately 50 competitors at a two day Alberta Trap Shoot competition they are holding in July, 1990.
- (2) MARKET - (*origin, segments*):** The majority of members are from the Lac La Biche area. Special events and competitions attract competitors/visitors from all over Alberta.
- (3) HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** The club has been operating since 1984. Their new facility began construction in 1987.
- (4) CURRENT PLANS - (*changes, marketing initiatives*):** They plan to actively market the new facility through other shooting associations and publications. Eventually, they would like to build a campsite at the facility. To begin with, they plan to start with a 20 site campground.
- (5) YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** The facility will be operational year round.
- (6) PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** They are planning to publish brochures in the future.
- (7) OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The Lac La Biche Shooting Association has built a multi-use recreational facility two miles northwest of Lac La Biche. The facility currently has a club house, two operating trap ranges (one more will be finished in 1990), rifle, hatchet, pistol, and archery ranges, and biathlon trails.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Native Perspective Good Times Jamboree (Lac La Biche)

- (1) **VISITATION - (*#s, length of stay*):** In past years, the Jamboree has attracted between 5,000 and 7,000 people. The festival occurs on a long weekend and the majority of visitors stay for the three days.
- (2) **MARKET - (*origin, segments*):** The majority of visitors are from all over Alberta and western Saskatchewan.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** The first festival was held in 1987.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS - (*changes, marketing initiatives*):** They are making arrangements for indoor and outdoor facilities to be available in 1990, as last year they had planned primarily for outdoor events and a freak blizzard snowed them out. Part of the festival includes a talent show. The first prize last year was 10 hours of free recording time, and they are trying to make arrangements to increase the recording time to 20 hours for the 1990 prize.
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** The event is held annually on the Victoria Day weekend in May.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** Brochures will be printed at a later date.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The Jamboree is a showcase of country/folk music talent, largely aboriginal, from all over Canada. In 1989, one band travelled from Australia. The Jamboree also includes dances, talent contests, and native craft displays.

The Native Perspective/CFWE FM operates a 24 hour radio broadcasting satellite. They also broadcast every weekday morning from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on CBC television.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Painted Wall Murals (Lac La Biche)

A local artist has been promoting the concept of painting wall murals on the sides of businesses in Lac La Biche to add aesthetic appeal to the town.

- (1) **VISITATION** - (*#s, length of stay*): N/A.
- (2) **MARKET** - (*origin, segments*): The murals are expected to attract local residents and tourists visiting the Lac La Biche area.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** The first wall murals were painted in 1989.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS** - (*changes, marketing initiatives*): The people interested in the wall murals are currently applying for government funding to proceed with the project (CTAP).
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT**: N/A.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS**: N/A.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS**: The idea is being developed to commission 20 more murals painted by artists. Local businesses, the Heritage and Culture Society, and the local high school are very interested in the project.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Plamondon Humdinger Daze

- (1) **VISITATION** - (*#s, length of stay*): No formal visitation statistics are maintained.
- (2) **MARKET** - (*origin, segments*): The market is from local towns in the surrounding area, such as Boyle, Grassland, Lac La Biche, etc..
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** The event started in 1985.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS** - (*changes, marketing initiatives*): They advertise only locally in the Lakeland Tourist Association flyers.
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** This event is held on the second weekend in June.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** No brochures available.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The festival includes parades, sports activities ("slo-pitch", fastball, tractor pull, "mud bog", monster truck shows, etc.), dinner, beerfest, and dances.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Plamondon Museum

- (1) VISITATION - (#s, length of stay):** There are no formal visitation statistics kept. Approximately 150 to 175 visitors each summer.
- (2) MARKET - (origin, segments):** The majority (66%) of the market is local in origin. Usually, local residents bring their guests to the museum. Approximately one-third of the market is tourists/vacationers in local campgrounds.
- (3) HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** The grand opening of the museum was in 1976.
- (4) CURRENT PLANS - (changes, marketing initiatives):** Road sign(s) to advertise the museum.
- (5) YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Seasonal operation - open in summer and staffed by S.T.E.P. students or local volunteers.
- (6) PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** No brochures.
- (7) OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The theme of the museum is the early history of the area. This includes artifacts from fur trade, native culture, early settlers, and farming implements.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Portage Aquatic Centre (Proposed)

- (1) VISITATION - (*#s, length of stay*):** No information available yet.
- (2) MARKET - (*origin, segments*):** They foresee the majority of the market being local in origin with a number of tourists visiting during the summer.
- (3) HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** Official opening is expected to be sometime in mid-1991.
- (4) CURRENT PLANS - (*changes, marketing initiatives*):** N/A.
- (5) YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Year round operation.
- (6) PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** None planned yet.
- (7) OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The Portage Aquatic Centre committee is planning and overseeing the development of the centre which will include a swimming pool and outside patio.

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TOURIST ATTRACTION: Round Lake Project

The Wandering River Development Society received funding from a community enhancement grant to develop a campground.

- (1) **VISITATION - (#s, length of stay):** No information on visitation numbers is available yet.
- (2) **MARKET - (origin, segments):** They expect to attract tourists from the local area plus Edmonton and northeastern Alberta.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** To be finished 1990/91.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS - (changes, marketing initiatives):** Under construction.
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** The camping will be of a seasonal nature, with the park open for winter activities.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** None available yet.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The campground will be a Lion's Club Park, run by the Lion's Club. The park will have day use facilities, 20 campsites, a boat launch, baseball diamonds, and cross- country ski trails.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Snowmobile Trail System - Wandering Rivers Area

The Wandering River Development Society is planning a snowmobile trail system with 100 to 150 kilometres of trails.

- (1) **VISITATION - (*#s, length of stay*):** No information available yet.
- (2) **MARKET - (*origin, segments*):** Since there are no other snowmobile trail systems east of Whitecourt, they would expect to attract visitors from all over northeastern Alberta, with a large number from Edmonton and Fort McMurray.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** Not built yet.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS - (*changes, marketing initiatives*):** Under construction.
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** Seasonal winter activity.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** None available.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** N/A.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Spruce Point Resort

This is a 160 site campground on the shores of Beaver Lake, run by the Beaver Lake Indian Band.

- (1) **VISITATION - (#s, length of stay):** N/A.
- (2) **MARKET - (origin, segments):** The majority of visitors originate in Edmonton and rural northeastern Alberta. They have a number of loyal campers who visit every summer.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** A campground has been operated on the site by the Indian Band for 10 years; for the past four years it has been Spruce Point.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS - (changes, marketing initiatives):** They have just completed construction of much of the campground and are beginning to market it more actively. Alberta Department of Transportation has put up road signs advertising the resort. Other marketing initiatives include advertisements in local tourist publications and possibly a display booth at the Annual Sportsmen's Show in Edmonton. Plans in the near future include upgrading power/water services to more campsites, and building a driving range and miniature golf course. Long range plans include the possibility of developing a full size golf course and a lodge at the resort.
- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT:** The campground is open, seasonally, from May to September.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS:** New brochure is being designed, and will be ready for distribution in the spring of 1990.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS:** The resort is in a particularly beautiful location and has two of the best beaches in the Lakeland area. The resort currently offers 160 campsites (42 with power hook-ups), a concession stand, rental teepees on the beach, trail riding, hiking, and great fishing. Two fishing associations, the Western Walleye Council and the Wilderness Sportsmen Club of Alberta, are planning Catch-and-Release Fish Derbies in the summer of 1990.

TOURIST ATTRACTION: Trailblazers Snowmobile Club

The club is a St. Paul based organization which runs a snowmobile trail system in the St. Paul area and sponsors snowmobile races.

- (1) **VISITATION** - (*#s, length of stay*): The club has 60 members. Special events races attract from 250 to 300 competitors, and approximately 2,000 spectators.
- (2) **MARKET** - (*origin, segments*): The majority (80%) of the market is local in origin. Many snowmobilers come from the Edmonton area.
- (3) **HOW LONG IN OPERATION?** N/A.
- (4) **CURRENT PLANS** - (*changes, marketing initiatives*): The Trailblazers Club is very interested in promoting snowmobiling and the development of trails in the St. Paul, and north to Fort McMurray areas.

The Bombadier and Polaris snowmobile dealerships, along with the Trailblazers Snowmobile Club, have developed a proposal to put in a long distance trail system from St. Paul to Lac La Biche, and from Lac La Biche to Fort McMurray.

- (5) **YEAR ROUND/SEASONAL/EVENT**: The snowmobiling season is from mid-November to mid-March, depending on snow conditions.
- (6) **PLANS, BROCHURES, DESCRIPTIONS**: No brochures.
- (7) **OTHER OBSERVATIONS**: N/A.